

# WIRE

THE WIRE ADVENTURES IN MODERN MUSIC

WWW.THEWIRE.CO.UK ISSUE 257 JULY 2005 £3.99



## Jamie Lidell

Ornette Coleman Animal Collective Keiji Haino Primer: Lone Horns Improv  
Magik Markers Monolake Tony Bevan



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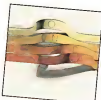
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Jamie Lidell photographed by Dirk Lueder

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"With MarkeB," the notes continue, "we would like to convey an overview of the independent label landscape

Of course, such acts of cooperation between the city fathers and ostensibly 'underground' cultural initiatives have not been without conflict. But as musicians with 25 years' experience behind them – Gut was in the first Einstürzende Neubauten line-up before founding groups such as Moina D and Malafem, the Moina record label and the club/radio enterprise Oceanclub; fellow Oceanclub DJ and producer Fehrmann was in Palais Schaumburg, a silent partner in *The Orb* and a

As to the presence of multinational entertainment corporations in Berlin, their impact on the development of the city's music is, at best, negligible, and, at worst, highly negative – chempyckung 90s Tochno stars nurtured by independents like MFS only to emascuate them. You're right, that's hardly an astonishing revelation – that's the way of the world. The novelist Joseph Roth was already complaining about the quality of "industrialised movement", which he described as "the product of hygienic training" in a piece about the Berlin pleasure industry back in 1930. Pleased to report there's still plenty of dirt between the cracks of new Berlin for the likes of MarkaB to cultivate such a healthy and resistant musical culture. **CHRIS BOHN**

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# Subscriber special

With this month's issue, all *The Wire*'s subscribers will receive a free copy of an exclusive new CD of underground sound art compiled by Australia's Liquid Architecture organisation



The sixth edition of Australia's Liquid Architecture sound arts festival takes place in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Canberra and Cairns between 1-23 July 2005. Liquid Architecture is a *sense-* (as opposed to *genre-*) specific festival, and features artists working on the periphery of music and sound culture. To coincide with this year's event, the Liquid Architecture organisers have compiled a special CD that is given away exclusively to all *The Wire*'s subscribers with copies of this month's issue; the CD contains tracks by artists that have appeared at the festival over the past six years, including Oren Ambarchi & Martin Ng, Buckettrider, Lawrence English & Ai Yamamoto, Robin Fox & Anthony Pateras, Pemon, Philip Samartzis and more. For details of how to subscribe to *The Wire* turn to page 98 or go to [www.thewire.co.uk](http://www.thewire.co.uk). For more information on Liquid Architecture go to [www.liquidarchitectures.org.au](http://www.liquidarchitectures.org.au).

Liquid Architecture is the latest instalment in an ongoing series of CDs that are specially produced for *The Wire* and given away to all the magazine's subscribers worldwide with selected issues of the zine. These CDs are only available to subscribers, and are not on sale with the magazine in the shops. If you are not yet a subscriber you can still get your hands on a copy of the CD by taking out a new subscription to *The Wire* this month.

For details of how to subscribe to *The Wire*, turn to page 98 of this month's issue or go to [www.thewire.co.uk](http://www.thewire.co.uk)

# Letters

Write to: Letters, *The Wire*, 23 Jack's Place, 6 Corbet Place, London E1 6NN, UK  
fax +44 (0)20 7422 5011, email [letters@thewire.co.uk](mailto:letters@thewire.co.uk)

## It hurts when I laugh

Stewart Lee's *Epiphany* (The Wire 258) raises two spectres with which all self-challenging avant gardists (hopefully a tautology) should wrestle. His comment "all-embracing, utopian art tends to be a bit shit" suggests the snobbery of which devotees of radical art are frequently accused. The comment follows a sweeping distinction between, essentially, the comedy of 'surprising' incongruity and the 'comforting' comedy of social observation. Lee associates the former with the relatively obscure George Carlin, neglecting its primary role in the acts of some very popular comedians (Spike Milligan, Monty Python, Sir Reeves, Harry Hill). His dismissal of the latter refuses to distinguish between, say, Jim Davidson and Eddie Izzard. How exactly is Izzard (or Davidson, for that matter) "all-embracing, utopian"?

The second spectre is raised by Lee's disdain for emotional signifiers, for how can there be a precise boundary between (legitimate) signification and legitimate communication? Is it not emotion rather than signification that is being superfluously condemned? Where, then, does the quest for non-embracing, non-utopian, non-emotionally-signifying art lead us? Lee's enthusiasms are of a piece with the *Laugh Till It Hurts* selections of comic music by Wire writers (same issue). So many of these choices exploit the same old postmodern gambits: self-consciousness of form, genre-bending, humiliating the audience for having predictable expectations. Don't you ever get tired of these? Doesn't their appeal at least partly rest on the signification of the superiority of those intellectually hip enough to appreciate the joke? How is Robert Wyatt singing "This is the first verse..." or Frank Chickens' ambiguous response to orientalism, funnier than the humane, subtle parishes and distinctive verbal dexterity of Neil Innes's or Bill Bailey's brilliant parodies?

Surprise is not all in art, and in the postmodern era it has even ceased to be very surprising. To be worthwhile, art needs to be an emotional language. There are constructive alternatives to tearing up the

dictionary. The challenge for radical contemporary art is to reject archness and formal self-absorption, to communicate emotional power without embarrassment or irony.

**Rychard Carington** via email

Sorry for *laughing*, but Stewart Lee's *numt* was to submit a personal epiphany, not a definitive study of comedy. And our *Laugh Till It Hurts* feature was about humour in Wireworld, which is neither higher nor lower than the rest of the world. To one side of it, maybe. With the possible exception of Whitehouse, I'm not sure where you got the idea of it being about humiliating the audience – Ed

Funny that your feature on comedy in music did not mention Florence Foster Jenkins and The Shaggs.  
**Martin Davidson** via email

## Not funny anymore

I've just about had enough of The Wire's continuous Zappa bashing. Now that you've not got Ben Watson to kick around no more (did he jump or was he dumped?) there appears to be no voice of reason when it comes to matters Zappa. I read The Wire cover to cover and seldom fail to find it – or the artists it covers – illuminating. But the Zappa item in your article on humour in music was the last straw in prejudice and willful ignorance. David Stubbs's item is so wrong in practically every statement I could easily write a 2000 word diatribe in response. Instead, a brief postscript: Stubbs mentions the "fecble scatology of titles like "Why Does It Hurt When I Pee?" and "Don't Eat The Yellow Snow" as though the titles implicate and ruin the songs, which couldn't be further from the truth. In failing to discuss their core musicality, the context in which they exist, and in the case of "Yellow Snow" a complex interweave of art socio-political inflections, Stubbs is doing the usual shallow Zappa snub job. We're told that "Disco Boy" is "embittered satire" but not told why or what that means, where "Billy The

Mountain" apparently has "dated sideswipes at Rolling Stone and the like". I wonder if Stubbs was reviewing a Freshlight Theatre or any number of other albums with references to people and places putting them in a specific time and place, whether he would still consider it "dated"? Then he mentions Zappa's "endless doo-wop parodies", when it's plainly obvious that FZ grew up with doo-wop, loved the form and the character, and while there may have been a satirical element to his doo-wop material, it was never a parody. Then we get the tired remark about Zappa's "sneering tirades against everyone and everything but Mr F Zappa Esq", which couldn't be further off the mark. In songs like "Broken Hearts Are For Assholes", FZ quite plainly considers himself human, as owner of a lonely office himself. Possibly the most astounding and gobsmackingly stupid comment in Stubbs's appraisal, however, is "before Zappa became quagmired in jazz rock". What??? FZ quite clearly only ever used jazz as a way to get where he wanted to go, compositionally. Stubbs, can you honestly say that you've really listened to *Hot Rats* or *The Grand Wazoo*? Stubbs is stumbling along a route too easily followed, simply because it's easy to do so... much easier than actually bothering to properly traverse a funny and often indigestible catalogue of post-1960s music making.

Yes, Uncle Meat is a great, often overlooked album, but there's one thing that quickly becomes apparent to those listeners willing to go a little further with FZ: he was terrifically consistent throughout his career; pieces like "The Blue Light" (1981) were as pointed and sharp as anything from those early Mothers albums, while right up to his last work, *Civilization Phase II*, the musical and moral paucity was always somewhere on display in his work. I would hate to give up my Wire on the basis of what seems to be a policy of Zappa bashing, but really, must this continue?

**Gary Steel** Auckland, New Zealand

## Corrections

Issue 259 The driving force behind Hvy! Nofia is Steve Parry, not Mark Parry, as stated in the *Avant Rock* column review of their *Anatomy Of Distort* CD. □

# The Joined-up World of The Wire

**The Wire 258: on sale from 21 July**

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[www.thewire.co.uk](http://www.thewire.co.uk) is The Wire's official Web presence, featuring news, out of print articles, MP3s, video clips, unedited interview transcripts, competitions, links, merchandise and more. New in the site's Web Exclusive section this month: MP3s to illustrate this month's Primer; the unedited transcripts of Roy Young's James Ladd interview and Julian Cowley's Tony Brown interview (as well as an MP3 taken from Brian's new *Brusard CD*); newly archived interview features on Ornette Coleman, plus exclusive video footage from Le Weekend 05 festival and more. Sign up to The Conduit at [www.thewire.co.uk](http://www.thewire.co.uk) for our fortnightly newsletter containing regular web updates.

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# Bitstream

News and more from under the radar.

Compiled by The Trawler



Just another diamond day: Wahti Buryan

**Wahti Buryan** is to sign to Fat Cat Records. Having started her musical life as an Andrew Loog Oldham protégée and inevitably touted as the 'new Marianne Faithfull', she turned out to be rather less and rather more than that. Though she released just one album, *Just Another Diamond Day* in 1969, before receding into obscurity, that record has since become a touchstone for the currently burgeoning free folk movement. She recently resurfaced for guest studio appearances with Glen Johnson of Piano Magic and Animal Collective (see interview, page 26) on their recent *Prospect Hummer EP*. The as-yet untitled LP will appear around November on Fat Cat (UK) and DiChristina (USA) >> **The results of the Prix Ars Electronica 2005** have been announced, with 2975 entries whittled down to six recipients of Golden Nica statuettes. Winners include sonic sculptor Maryanne Amacher in the digital music category, and MIUKproject in the Interactive Art category. This year, says Ars Electronica's artistic director Garfield Stocker, has seen new technologies being taken for granted as media for artistic expression, rather than being foisted upon as novelties for their own sake. The awards ceremony will take place in conjunction with the Ars Electronica Festival on 2 September in Linz's Brucknerhaus. A CD and DVD documentation of the competition will be issued at the same time >> **"Horse Taping is Killing Music - And It's Illegal"**, ran the cautionary slogan back in the late 1970s, when it was feared that the music industry would collapse as a result of listeners borrowing and taping records onto audiocassette rather than buying them. Of course, nothing of the sort happened. Instead, listeners were inspired to consume whole new worlds of music, especially via compilation or "mixtapes" circulated by family and friends. It's this mixtape culture which Sonic Youth's *Thurston Moore* explores in a new book entitled *Mix Tape: The Art of Cassette Culture* (Universe Publishing), examining how blank cassettes enabled listeners to become their own curators by re-sequencing and theming sounds in customised selections. For the book he invited a range of guest home tapers, including DJ Spooky and Jim O'Rourke, to reminisce about their own favourite mixtapes and the stories behind them >> **Simon Reynolds's** acclaimed account of the post-punk era, *Rip It Up And Start Again*, will not be published in the US until February 2006. A re-edited version for the American

audience is in preparation, although Penguin, his American publishers, assure us that the main content will remain the same. Of course, there is nothing to stop American readers of an anglophone bent from purchasing the current Faber edition >> **Moog**, the 2004 feature film documentary about the inventor of the synthesizer of the same name, is now available on a Plexifilm DVD. Written and produced by Ryan Page and Hans Fjellstedt, the film is part biography of the 70-year-old Robert Moog, part exploration of the role of the instrument in determining the shape of modern music. The list of influences the film cites suggests that this was for ill as well as good: for every Stereolab a Rick Wakeman. What's more, the fascination with the synth shows how easily futurist devices become the stuff of retro kitsch. Some critics felt the original film was short both on cultural and biographical analysis but this edition, featuring 47 minutes of new material, seeks to make amends for that. [www.plexifilm.com](http://www.plexifilm.com) >> **Soft Machine** aficionados take note: the group's ultra-rare Polydor debut single from 1967, the psychedelic romp 'Love Makes Sweet Music' and its equally sought-after B-side 'Feelin' Reelin' 'Squealin'', is now available for the first time on CD, on the compilation, *Out/Bloody/Rageous (Anthology 1967-1973)* (Sony/Columbia). The two tracks have only been reissued once before, on the long deleted triple LP compilation *Triple Echo* >> **Jar** is the title of a new compilation on the schizoid UK label **Picked Egg**. One of many tracks that make it worth investigating includes Evolution Control Committee's boofing juxtaposition of a typically 'Spanish Flea'-style 60s instrumental piece by Herb Albert with Chuck D and Flavor Flav's rap from Public Enemy's 'Rebel Without A Pause'. Despite their respectively jaunty and jagged edges, the pieces make for a miraculously perfect fit, both complementing and subverting each other perfectly >> A similarly monumental cultural clash occurs on the release of a new album by Tuva's **Yat Kha**, which features versions of Led Zeppelin's 'When The Love Breaks', Bob Marley's 'Exodus' and Joy Division's 'Love Will Tear Us Apart' rendered in the group's round-fumbling throat-singing style led by Albert Kuusen >> The ill-fated UK innovator **Joe Meek** is to be the subject of a West End theatre production and, coincidentally, a four CD anthology entitled *Portrait Of A Genius: The RGM Legacy on Castle Music*. Before his mysterious and violent death in

1967, Meek produced a slew of hits for the likes of Lonnie Donegan, Chris Barber and Marty Wilde. They may sound like workaday period pieces today, but Meek's productions were considered pioneering in their day. Apart from the obvious 'Telstar', one track has retained its sense of prescience untaunted by over-exposure: 1960's 'I Hear A New World', on which Meek masqueraded as The Blue Men, whose vamps and vocals and guitar figure orbited like a lonely prototype satellite, feel like a sneak glimpse over the horizon at 40 years of pop to come >> As reported in our **CLIQUEDEAD** story (The Wire 241), **Thameses's Deacon** is to make his cinematic debut providing voiceover for Chris Ruffatto's *The Zoo Project*, a surreal animated movie about an agoraphobic woman whose lonely world becomes subject to a series of possibly hallucinatory phantom occurrences when the news of the end of the world is announced on TV. The film, which could have arisen from the creatively despondent lyrical world of Anticon, received its world premiere in mid-May. [www.wakefieldins.com](http://www.wakefieldins.com) >> The next **Avanto Festival** will be held on 18-20 November in Helsinki, Finland. The curatorial team is currently seeking proposals for short films/videos to be screened in their annual Avantoscope compilation programmes. But feature-length single-channel works, multi-projections and installations are welcome as well. Guidelines at [www.avantofestival.com](http://www.avantofestival.com) >> A new organisation for improvised music has been launched. **The International Society For Improvised Music (ISIM)** is intended as "a support network for musicians, teachers, students, listeners, scholars, critics and industry professionals engaged in all forms of improvised music". Represented among the board's directors and advisory council are such artists as Paulino Oliveros, Evan Parker and Archie Shepp. Noting the "unprecedented range" of influences and resources currently available to improvisers, ISIM founder and president Ed Sarath ambitiously suggests that improv offers the possibility of cross-disciplinary applications, extended into fields as diverse as "business, education, science, communications and sports". Whether sportsmen like Rooney, Ronaldo and Hernan are aware of the advantage to which they could put the stratagems of Evan Parker and Derek Bailey remains a moot point. Along with other interested parties they could do worse than look in at [www.isimprov.org](http://www.isimprov.org). □



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# Magik Markers

Bare knuckle rides. By Marc Masters



Bare street ride: Elisa Ambrogio (crouching), Pete Nolan and Leah Quimby

"We are all totally intense personalities that tend to clash heavily," says Pete Nolan, drummer in the nomadic American trio Magik Markers. "Being in the same room with us is probably too much for most people. Our tours usually involve heavy fucking fights, drama and screaming. But we all have big hearts in the right spots." This vibrant tension ignites the group's improvised noise rock, whose combative energy is aptly captured by the cover photos on their latest album, *I Trust My Guitar*, etc (released on Thurston Moore's Ecstatic Peace label). Against the pastoral backdrop of an autumnal Indiana field, Nolan stands with guitarist and singer Elisa Ambrogio and bassist Leah Quimby in a series of violent poses, complete with angry stares, cocked fists and arm-twisting scums. "Elisa was thinking of all those 60s psych records that have a band of hairs hanging all peacefully in a big green expanse." Nolan recounts. "She wanted to do the same kind of shot, only with the band at war." "I love album covers like Ten Years After's *A Space In Time* or Roy Music's *Country Life*: humans in nature, forcing one or the other to awkward displacement," expounds Ambrogio. "So I told [photographer] Jason [Warragans] I wanted pictures of us fighting in a field."

*I Trust My Guitar*, etc. The Magik Markers' first LP after numerous GDR releases on Nolan's Arbitrary Signs label, is itself tense and unruly. Pushing the group's aggression into a darker space, cuts like the chilling title track and the paroxysm "Morris House", teem with scary noise akin to the hair-raising cacophony of Swans, Live Skull and Teenage Jesus & The Jerks. The sidelong clatter "Straight A's in Love", 21 vicious minutes of crashing cymbals, scraping guitars and cavernous howls, was recorded live in a practice space. But the rest of *I Trust...* happened in a proper studio (Brooklyn's Rare Book Room, with Samara Lubelski producing), a first for the trio. "We had so many ideas that we didn't know what to do with ourselves," explains Nolan. "We recorded for an hour,

half instrumental, half with vocals. I patterned the LP after Love's *Da Capo*: side A, songs; side B, sidelong jam." "It felt less fun and more dark [than previous sessions]," Ambrogio adds. "As soon as we listened to the tapes, we got spooked and nearly walked away from the whole thing."

Magik Markers formed in 2000, when the three musicians were living in a Connecticut house owned by Ambrogio's grandparents. "The basement was done up by Elisa's dad in the 60s in the style of a homemade psychedelic paradise," says Nolan. "We decided to start a band for the final blowout party before the house was sold." Dubbed *Magik Markers* by Nolan after a misheard Simon Finn lyric ("I came out he really sings 'magik moccasin'"), admits Nolan, the group had no plans to write songs. "We have always improvised everything from the start. We believe in everything for the first time," insists Ambrogio. "You cannot get bored or boring unless you are scared, which we are sometimes, but only free music forces you out or over. Get over it or get out." "I wanted to do something that sounded like the New Zealand band Dinosaur Jr.," Nolan adds. "Primitive scrappy rumblings and moving noise with rock band instrumentation." The trio's crackling dynamic sparked quickly, fuelled by diverse influences. Quimby, for example, is a surf rock devotee who Ambrogio claims "pretty much stops liking music after about 1969." "In my mind I always think that I am playing something from an intense 60s surf movie scene," Quimby admits. "Elisa and Peter are always ready and able to go to new places and channel exactly what they are feeling. I am much slower to change but I think we have all evolved together."

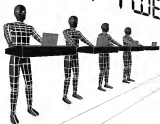
Moving to western Massachusetts in 2001, Magik Markers became ensconced in the area's burgeoning scene. "It was the first music scene I'd been a part of where it didn't seem like everyone was out to get each other," says Nolan. Neighbours Sonic Youth took notice and brought Magik Markers along on tour last

summer. "Playing the Sonic Youth tour just reinforced our towering ego. It was what we were doing all along in our minds, so it just made sense when we were actually doing it," declares Nolan. Constantly evolving, the group's live set is an exhilarating assault. Nolan delivers hailstorms of unfettered pounding, while Ambrogio and Quimby's persistent guitar dissonance bolsters Ambrogio's brash screams and belligerent exhortations to the crowd. "I would like to make every audience unafraid and lacking in passivity," Ambrogio asserts. "I want to make people mad and think harder." "We evoke strong reactions and that's what we want," concurs Nolan.

Playing numerous festivals recently, Magik Markers have built bonds with comrades like Wolf Eyes, Double Leopards and Nautical Almanac. "You kind of can't help but appropriate ideas and be influenced by each other's gravity," says Nolan. "Recently we toured with No Neck Blues Band, and playing with such a massive band broadened our sound. We wanted to make three people sound like seven." Still, as Quimby puts it, "I don't like the idea of biting off anyone else's ideas. That's the beauty of improvisation. I'm sure that we sound like any number of different bands at given times, but I really try to just focus on whatever is in the air that night."

Now spread around North America (Nolan in Brooklyn, Ambrogio in Chicago and Quimby in Montreal), Magik Markers will spend most of 2005 on the road, touring with Dinosaur Jr., Corsets On Fire and Sunburned Hand Of The Man, and recording with J Mascis for a second release on Ecstatic Peace. "I like to tour with bands that force our hands," says Ambrogio. "At this point 95 per cent of music is a record feeding back on a record feeding back on a record. It is nullifying. I want to concentrate on music and focus inward, to concentrate on our own language of sound. To me it's the only way that any new music can exist." □ *I Trust My Guitar*, etc is out now on Ecstatic Peace/Apostasy. [www.magikmarkers.com](http://www.magikmarkers.com)

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# Monolake

Organising principles. By Keith Moliné



The future is orange: Monolake's Robert Henke (left) and T++

"Tonight we will play in one of the most amazing places on this planet, the Berghain club in Berlin," enthuses Monolake's mainman Robert Henke. "A cathedral for ecstasy and otherworldly experiences, driven by the reverberating beat. It's up to Monolake to fill the room with beats and atmosphere. You don't listen to Monolake's music so much as immerse yourself in it. From the huge, verdant panoramas of 1997's *Hongkong* through the edgier, darker systems of 2003's *Momentum* and forthcoming album *Polygon Cities*, the creation of atmospheres so rich and complex that they exist almost as tangible environments has been Henke's stock in trade. "Monolake are about sculpting sound, achieving a state rather than composing structures in a purely musical sense," he explains. "Each single event is part of this temporal sculpture and is treated with the same care. For me rhythm equals distribution of masses and texture equals masses and surface."

For the past ten years Henke has pursued his vision of a mile-wide form of Techno soundscaping with unwavering commitment, honing his art with each release while resisting the seductions of dancefloor fashions and new software that might have tempted a less headstrong musician. "I still think there's much to discover in my own universe and that I am still far away from being perfect in what I'm doing," he says. "I've had moments of insecurity where I thought everything has been said and there is a need for a radical change, but now I'm quite happy that I've found new secret rooms in my own world."

Though perhaps inadvertent, Henke's mixed metaphor serves as a perfect summation of the Monolake signature sound. A cursory listen to tracks like *Momentum's* "Cern" or "Ionized" from the 2001 album *Cinemascope* suggests open environments and billowing soundscapes, a truly geographical music. Closer attention reveals a wealth of private detail, particularly in the way he alchemises rhythm from the swollen, gaseous atmospheres. It's a technique that has not come easily, especially after the departure of original collaborator Gerhard Behles to found the music software company Ableton (for whom Henke also plays a key technical role – "I find most of the bugs"). Henke is characteristically candid about this difficult

period. "I always found it much easier to deal with sound than with grooves," he admits. "When Gerhard left I was struggling. His contribution had been to build grooves while I created the atmospheres and textures. I had to redefine the whole workflow in the studio, giving up our session approach and focusing on finding a different approach to rhythm."

Certainly Monolake's two recent singles "Invisible Force" and "Aes Carbon", both trailers for *Polygon Cities*, pack a strong persuasive punch. With each release Henke's work is getting heavier, darker, more brutally precise. In some ways his most recent music is closer in spirit to the icy expanses of the Basic Channel dubplates of the early to mid-90s. Although Monolake's early releases came out on BC offshoot Chain Reaction, they were never fully congruent with the Berlin label's house style. "In retrospect," sighs Henke, "the strong connection to Chain Reaction put my music in a 'bin', which did not fit too well. For instance, people often want to see dub elements in my work, and 'minimal Techno' works only partly as a description."

Does his work come from a more esoteric, academic tradition of electronics, or are its roots firmly in Techno? Henke is unequivocal on the point. "Techno," he declares, "I love the idea of Techno as a massive, emotional driving force. Electronics is a genre which I associate with tons of CDs on my shelf where I cannot distinguish one track from another." He is keen to emphasize that while his music may have only loosely matched the templates forged by his Berlin peers, the scene was nevertheless important to its development. "Suddenly there was a community of people sharing the same ideas, and this vibe gave me a lot of energy."

The excitement of studying sound engineering at film school by day and dancing the nights away in clubs like Tresor was the spur for Henke to start merging the wraparound sound designs of his pre-Monolake work like 1994's *Piercing Music* with hard-edged beats. The ever-changing Berlin cityscape was no less influential. "I was exploring the eastern part of the city just as everyone else from the West, finding exciting new places every day," he recalls wistfully. "Later I had a studio on the ninth floor of a former East German

office building, right at Alexanderplatz. The Gravity CD [2001] was made there, while watching the sun rise over the roofs of the city."

Monolake has recently been re-engaged with the arrival of a new collaborator, the enigmatically named T++. Henke admires his new cohort for his "strong sense of organisation. This allows me to float around and let my spontaneous ideas grow. There is not much discussion necessary. Everything just evolves once we sit together surrounded by all these nice instruments." Speaking of which, his chosen tools – cumbersome 80s monster keyboards like the Synclavier and the PPG Wave rather than the vintage analogue equipment and micro-software favoured by the vast majority of his peers – must account for his music's emphasis on dense, polymorphous texture. Indeed, the PPG was developed with the financial support of Tangerine Dream, whose early 70s albums like *Zeit* and *Pneuma* are the most obvious antecedents to Henke's work. "I have to admit that I was completely blown away by their music," he confesses, continuing, "With the PPG, I turn it on and I am in a time machine putting me back 20 years. The Synclavier is a special case. It has a very unique and remarkable sound. The process of starting it up alone is worth everything. You do not just turn it on, you enter it." It sounds like the perfect Monolake machine.

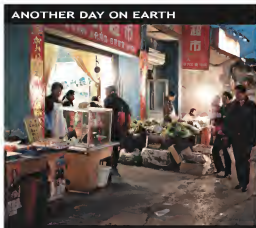
Occasionally Henke has been a victim of his own sound-sculpting skill. Such was the case with his *Studies For Thunder* installation project. "I wanted to create a structural framework which allows for synthesising the sound and especially the spatial movement of a thunderstorm. I came so close to reality that I started to make it more abstract again in order to keep it exciting. A lot of people don't even realise that they are not listening to 'real' recordings but to a completely artificial landscape." It's in the grey area between the natural and the synthetic that the Monolake magic happens. "When I did an open air version in Mexico the people looked up in the sky, waiting for the rain," he smiles, "which funny enough came the next day at exactly the same time." [Polygon Cities is out now on Monolake/Imbalance. Monolake play three UK dates this month: see Out There




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# Tony Bevan

Foghorn legwork. By Julian Cowley



Heavy hand: Tony Bevan

"The single most important thing to me as a player is the way the rhythm works," says free improvising saxophonist Tony Bevan. "Maybe it comes from listening to Captain Beefheart – those broken rhythms. And to Derek Bailey; the way he uses time in his playing – free time." Bevan readily acknowledges musicians who have inspired his own distinctive approach, and is currently to be heard in a quintet with percussionist Orphy Robinson, drummer Mark Sanders, bassist John Edwards and Spring Heel Jack soundscaper Ashley Wales. Their fascinating new CD *Brused* is the fifth release on Bevan's own Foghorn label.

"When I first started playing, I used to listen to saxophonists like Warne Marsh and Zoot Sims, the Cool School, and that's a big part of what I play, strangely enough," says Bevan. "Marsh has a very odd rhythmic feel, very flexible. He played around the beat and staggered things – it didn't quite fall in the way you expected it to. That's always been of interest to me – the way you can place things and the way it works rhythmically. On 'Temperanto', the third track on *Brused*, there's quite a lot of Warne Marsh or Bobby Wellins, but it's filtered through Derek Bailey. Sonny Rollins was very important to me too, the way he could play in and out and divide things around, but I've got no real interest in playing jazz in any serious way. What's always interested me is playing improvised music."

Bevan's older brother Neil introduced him to recordings by Beefheart and Terry Riley during his early teenage years in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. Their use of the soprano sax persuaded him to begin learning it, and around the same time he attended various gigs by local musician Lol Coxhill, who gave Bevan an introductory lesson on the straight horn. "I picked up a tenor not long after I started soprano," Bevan recalls. "I was self-taught and already knew what I was interested in. A couple of older boys at school knew I was into Beefheart and said, 'We've got this group,

do you want to come along and play?' We used to do impressions of the Evan Parker/Derek Bailey/Han Bennink LP *Topography Of The Lungs*. I heard all that stuff when it was new. I heard Peter Brötzmann before Albert Ayler, and Alex Von Schlippenbach before Cecil Taylor. I liked Ornette Coleman a lot, but it's only very recently that I've started to like Coltrane at all." In 2003 Foghorn released *Horne Cooking In The UK*, documenting Bevan's and Edwards' momentous improvising encounter with free jazz drum legend Sunny Murray, but Bevan still shies away from being considered a free jazz player.

Bevan suggests that his tenor sound on *Brused* is essentially the same kind of playing as on the acclaimed 1991 release *Bigshots* (Inoue) with bassist Paul Rogers and percussionist Steve Noble. Indeed, Bevan had the fundamentals of his current style in place before making his 1988 recording debut, *Original Gravity* (Inoue), with guitarist Greg Kingston and percussionist Matt Lewis. "I made a conscious decision that I was going to go for a clear ringing sound," he says. "I've done a lot of extended techniques, multiphonics and various kinds of spit, slap and screech noises, but that stopped being of great interest to me quite a long time ago. I'm interested in playing lines and in the sound of the instrument. I play a bit harder now, I suppose."

That added muscle derives in large part from Bevan taking up the challenge of the bass saxophone, a decision made when Paul Rogers moved to Paris. Instead of joining a planned trio tour with vocalist Phil Minton, "I went to sleep one afternoon and suddenly woke up and said, 'Bass saxophone,'" Bevan explains, laughing. "Charlie Collins in Sheffield had a bass sax and had had problems with his teeth and wasn't playing it anymore. He brought it down to Oxfordshire... and I was a bass saxophonist. When I first started, I used to say I wanted to sound like a cross between

Magic Band bassist Rockette Morton and Swedish Cool School baritone player Lars Gullin."

Bevan treats bass saxophone as a serious instrument, not a merely incidental element in his music. "It's really hard," he sighs. "Physically demanding. You have to shift so much air and don't realise you're doing it. Your diaphragm is just not used to working that hard. It's a big span on your hands and it's quite heavy. I went to America in 2000, coast to coast with it – I wished I'd taken up piccolo. On tour I find that my hips go on one side, and my knees because of the weight. It took a long time before I felt the instrument was under my control. It sounds great but responds in very odd ways. The slightest variation in reed or temperature can throw it off. On tenor I can play multiphonics and know exactly what I'm going to get. Bass sax doesn't always do that; it's frustrating but exciting at the same time. I use an open mouthpiece and quite hard needs so it's expressive in the way that the tenor is."

The group featured on *Brused* will tour Britain later this year. It has grown out of a longstanding trio with Sanders and Edwards that in 2000 recorded *Nothing Is Permanent But War* (Foghorn). Initially, a quartet with Orphy Robinson on vibes was envisaged. Ashley Wales added a musical infusion of expansive electronics during his *Back In Your Town* series of gigs at East London's 291 Gallery; the chemistry was special and a quintet was established. As the CD testifies, the combination makes for an exceptional and exhilarating improvising outfit. "Orphy's such a great musician," Bevan enthuses. "Ironically, we've done loads of gigs and I've only seen him play vibes one time. He normally turns up with steel drum and then it could be anything. It gets to the point where you're scared to put your instruments down as he starts playing them... and better than you." □ *Brused* is out now on Foghorn. [www.foghornrecords.co.uk](http://www.foghornrecords.co.uk)

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# Global Ear: Kiev

A SURVEY OF SOUNDSCAPES AROUND THE PLANET

**This month: A surge of electronic music activity is turning up the contrast in Ukraine's revolutionised capital city.**  
By Yelena Chernova



Andriy Kintchenko (left) and Katja Zavoloka & Nata Zhyzhchenko at Sound Details



There's a much loved old Soviet comedy called *The Diamond Arm* in which a humble economist travels abroad. On his return, he prepares to deliver a lecture about his trip. He notices a board advertising his talk as "New York: A City Of Contrasts". But, he protests, he went to Istanbul, not New York. In response, the sign is changed to "Istanbul: A City Of Contrasts". When this movie was made in the late 1960s, nobody could have guessed that by the end of the century, each of the 15 former Soviet republics could be separately described as "a country of contrasts" – or even "a country of striking contrasts", if the observer managed to get beyond each nation's capital.

Like other post-Soviet countries, Ukraine is indeed full of striking contrasts. But what makes it different is its tragic duality, resulting from its geopolitical location between comfortable, civilised Europe and the vastness of Russia. It's the second largest country in Europe and one of the most populous, with a history that spans more than 1000 years. While Ukraine maintains strong cultural ties with Russia, it's very European in nature and spirit, yet it remains a blind spot to many Europeans, even after Ukrainian singer Ruslana won the 2004 Eurovision Song Contest and the country hosted this year's finals. But Ukraine also puts on more significant if less high profile festivals, and Ukrainian artists are beginning to enjoy artistic success and win international attention. In May, an underground electronics festival called Detail Zvuk (Sound Details) brought Kiev's citizens a taste of music that is different, unusual and even irritating to those accustomed to melodic traditions.

The festival was organised by the Neosound label, which was founded in 2000 by Andriy Kintchenko, a young musician from Kharkiv who has contributed significantly to the development of experimental music here. "The Ukrainian alternative music scene is young and actively growing, but not yet well established," says Kintchenko. "It would be very nice, and I'm doing my best, for the Ukrainian experimental music scene to be known and honoured worldwide, and there are a lot of things to do to make it happen." Sound Details is one of them. The crowd queuing at the entrance proved that experimental music has more than a few devoted followers in Kiev. Opening the first night, Kintchenko collaborated with Paul Kust on an electronic composition in which a guttural pitter patter cut through a claustrophobic crescendo accompanied by shamanistic

yells and sighs. Then Alla Zagaykevych took her place at the computer mixing console to process real-time violinist Sergey Okhrimchuk. The Moglia's side project OK\_01 sounded extraterrestrial as repetitive loops set the rhythm in motion, upon which a composition was constructed. With its low knocks and high peeps, the piece was like a millstone grinding out a melody that nipped right into the head.

Ukrainian ex-pats Aukudo, who now live in Berlin, collaborated with electronic musician Kotra on a fully interactive show. The screen displayed several moving sets of squares that constantly shifted position accompanied by bold, rhythmic noise. Responding to the shifting visual patterns, the musicians ceased their wall of sound for a moment and then collapsed it on the unsuspecting listeners.

With its minimal Techno and clicks "if" cuts, I/DEX sounded almost melodic after the previous ringing noise. His performance was followed by two charming girls, Katja Zavoloka and Nata Zhyzhchenko. Katja produced powerful rhythmic pulses, into which Nata wove her soporific – a Ukrainian ethnic pipe. After FRUITS (Russia) and Franz Pomassl (Austria), the noise segment was completed with a mindbending performance by the Dutch Staalplaat Soundsystem. Thereafter dedicated listeners stuck it out for the festival's Dance Block, dancing late into the night to the unfettered grooves of Lo.Mex, Ottosdispersunk, MacCon, Dunsweley 69 and Kacassava.

Once it was over, festivalgoers were greeted by a welcome dose of reality in the shape of heavy fog and drizzle, and the silence after 14 hours of music felt like a blow to the head. With the music still ringing in our ears, the conversation turned to the foggy prospects of electronic music in Ukraine. Although there is still plenty of work to be done in taking homegrown electronic music beyond its borders, much has already been accomplished. The Neosound catalogue of ten CDs, some 20 free downloadable online releases and eight CD-Rs have been distributed worldwide. Ukrainian musicians have worked in international collaborations with Kim Cascone, Francisco López, Alan Courts, Tom Carter and Andrea Berthling, among others. They have also participated in such European festivals as Club Transmediale and GARAGE (Germany), UltraMuz (Hungary) and Unsound (Poland), while audiovisual artists have presented works at Kryptonale, EMAF, Villette Numérique, Netnagie, Videoez, [d]vision and elsewhere.

Much as Ukrainian electronic musicians are concerned about the prospects of participation in the world electronic community, they are not neglecting their homeland. Kotra's Dmitry Fedorenko should be credited for most of the experimental music happenings that have taken place in Kiev in recent years. The Ukrainian electronic community has planned a number of smaller events together with the Kiev Musical Academy – one-day festivals dedicated to Russian noise (Ru.NOISE), the Polish experimental scene, Swiss improvisation (Swissound), etc. Such events overcome the lack of financial support from state institutions for modern art and music by finding sympathetic international sponsors such as the Polish Institute, Pro Helvetia and the Goethe-Institut. However, prime movers like Kintchenko are ambivalent about support based on "national" musics. "Personally, I don't too much believe in a 'special sound' of a certain country these days when it comes to electronic music," he says. "I think Ukrainian artists have a strong and fascinating sound but I believe it is more about talent and passion for music."

Well, you certainly need talent and passion to overcome the numerous problems that electronic musicians face daily in Ukraine. "You have to be a businessman yourself to be able to release your music," argues Kintchenko. "The spending power in Ukraine and Russia is very low. People cannot afford to buy CDs for 10-12 dollars, not to mention 20 – the price of Britney Spears CDs here. That is why pirate CDs that cost three to four dollars are so popular here." American sanctions taken to stop the production of pirate CDs in Ukraine resulted in the closure of all but one CD manufacturing plant, which seriously worsened the situation for Ukrainian musicians without appreciably stanching the flow of pirate CDs onto the market. It's just that they are now simply imported from Russia. Releasing Ukrainian music on CD, on the other hand, has become much more difficult, and few labels here are prepared to release outsider music.

Nevertheless, there is no problem that cannot be overcome by the inhabitants of such a country of striking contrasts. Dedicated Ukrainian musicians, young and not so young, are optimistic and full of enthusiasm. In time, they will definitely stake their claim on the international electronic music scene. □ [www.neosound.org](http://www.neosound.org)





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## **Invisible Jukebox: Keiji Haino**

Every month we play a musician a series of records which they are asked to identify and comment on - with no prior knowledge of what they're about to hear.

Tested by Alan Cummings. Photos: Neale Smith

Vocalist and multi-instrumentalist Keiji Haino was born in 1952 in Chiba on the outskirts of Tokyo. A non-conformist from an early age, he dropped out of high school in order to become a professional musician. In 1970 he formed his first group *Lost Aaraff*, combining the ecstatic rush of free jazz with a sense of ritualized yet violent theatricality that drew heavily upon The Doors. Their third gig, at an anti-government festival, was greeted with a hail of boulders and a near riot. In 1978, after an extensive period of self study in rhythm, space and breathing patterns, Haino formed a radical rock trio called *Fushitsusha*, welding improvisatory technique to the high volume dynamics of hard rock. Many line-up changes later, the group still continue their intense reconstruction of the idiom, currently as a duo with Haino incorporating live sampling to loop his own drumming and guitar playing.

*Fushitsusha* remains Haino's best known group, but he is also involved in an ever shifting panorama of new units, multi-instrumental solo activities and one-off collaborations. While often stereotyped as a typhoon-force guitarist, Haino's singular aesthetic marks his approach to a wealth of other instruments, from handheld percussion to hurdy-gurdy, electronics and an arsenal of unusual ethnic woodwinds and strings. In recent years he has taken to the decks in several Tokyo clubs under the unlikely guise of DJ Keiji Haino.

Since his first dates outside Japan in 1981, he has played with musicians and improvisers such as Derek Bailey, Peter Brötzmann, Thurston Moore, Tony Conrad, Faust and Christian Marclay. His discography currently encompasses more than 140 releases, the most recent being a solo piece for digital theremin and "air electronics", *Uchu Ni Karami Tsuite Iru Waga Irami* (PSP).

The Jukebox took place in Newcastle, the day after a marathon four hour solo set at the Music Lover's Field Companion festival, where Haino played more than 40 instruments.

## BLIND LEMON JEFFERSON "SEE THAT MY GRAVE IS KEPT CLEAN"

FROM KING OF THE BLUES (PYE) 1998

[With its seconds] Yes. Blind Lemon Jefferson.

Do you know the song?

It's the one I covered, "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean" [on 2004's two *Black Blues* CDs]. You didn't tell me this was going to be a quiz!

Sory. How do you choose the songs you play in your covers group, Ahlyoo?

The lyrics, mainly. Though in this case it was the song title, "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean" – that's such an amazing thing to say. There are so many different meanings in those words. It says something about the transmigration of souls, that he's gone and doesn't want to come back, I feel the same way. But when I start thinking about what precisely attracted me to this song and these lyrics, I think it has something to do with the idea of seeing your own death. The possibility of reversing life and death resonates very deeply with me, the question of from what instant you can be aware of death or aware of life. Those two come together perfectly in the image of the grave in this song.

Do you play any other blues covers?

"I Put A Spell On You" by Screamin' Jay Hawkins.

I've never played it outside Japan though. I first heard it when I was in high school, the Creedence Clearwater Revival version. I was blown away by how cool it was. Then later I heard the Arthur Brown version. I think I even played it when I was in high school.

## MUNIR BASHIR "HANAN"

FROM MESOPOTAMIA (LE CHANT DU MONDE) 2004

I think I've got this at home... I definitely have.

I've become very forgetful lately. I can't remember musicians' names any more. Give me a clue.

The Middle East. Iraq.

In that case it must be Munir Bashir. On these speakers the harmonics sound very strange, less like an oud, more like a gut-strung guitar. I was sitting here wondering how he was able to get those overtones out of a gut guitar. If he'd been playing a fretless classical guitar I really would have been worried.

Do you know the album it's from?

From *Mesopotamia*. The first track on that album brings me out in goosebumps every time I hear it.

What drew you to Bashir's music?

Not just with Bashir but with everything I listen to, I tend to make assumptions about the musician's character. Less to do with sounds they make and more with the kind of a person I imagine they are. With Munir Bashir I imagine that his mind was intensely flexible. There's one CD where he plays string sounds from all the world – American 50s blues guitar stuff, rock 'n' roll, Hawaiian, all kinds of different roots to the sound of the guitar. Hearing that really convinced me of his mental flexibility. Without that there's no way he could have come up with those opening phrases on *Mesopotamia*. They literally blow your mind. It's like they keep you at a distance, shoving you away. I think of his music in terms of what I do myself, and emotionally it's an act of kindness – it's showing people just how you can take a sound, of how unfathomably deep you can make music. I feel the same way about other Middle Eastern musicians, guys like [Iranian tar player Hossein] Alizadeh.

How long have you been listening to Middle Eastern music?

I can't remember when I first started, but it's a long time ago. When World Music first started appearing –

I absolutely detest that phrase – they used to release a lot of one-volume overviews. Like one volume for Europe, one for America, bang, bang, bang. Gradually they started to focus in on smaller regions. That's when it started to get interesting. Recently I picked up an amazing release of nan guan music from Taiwan that focuses upon single houses in single villages. It's an eight CD set and there are six of them! Eight CDs just for nan guan from one musician's house in some village, then another eight CDs from someone else's house from the next village [laughs]. But to come back to your question, I only started getting deeply into the Middle Eastern stuff once I heard European medieval music. Usually when you first hear sac or oud music there's a great gap between it and your own experience. Hearing the medieval stuff made me want to hear longer masses than the edited ones you'd hear on old compilations.

## MASAYUKI TAKAYANAGI & KAORU ABE "MASS PROJECTION"

FROM MASS PROJECTION (JWA) 2001

I think I've got this but I've never listened to it properly. They're both Japanese players, aren't they? I would guess it's [Kaoru] Abe on alto and [Masayuki] Takayanagi on guitar.

Right. Was *Takayanagi* an influence?

No. People always assume that I must listen to loads of noise and free jazz but I very rarely do. Sometimes for better or worse. Like just now, it gets thrust upon me. I enjoy it occasionally but it's never had any bearing on my own music. I have conflicting feelings about Takayanagi. Part of me is sorry that I never got to see him, but there's another part of me that is grateful that I never did. I feel the same way about Takayanagi as I feel about Jimi Hendrix. I'd seen Jimi play when I was a kid, 14 or 15. I don't think I would have stopped myself being influenced. Every musician who saw Jimi play back then carries him around with them like a dead weight. That's how I feel about Takayanagi.

You played with Abe though.

I did. We played together in a one-off quartet called The Gurgakuta [in 1974] and we also played a few times in a smaller group, a trio or quartet I think. I was already playing guitar but not singing. It's all a long time ago and Abe wasn't in the best of health at the time. His fans won't want to hear this, but I think I gave him a little shot of energy. About a week before he died called me in and said, "I've decided to leave. I wanted to start a rock band with me. He told me how his wife [author and model Izumi Suzuki] had smashed up all his Jimi Hendrix and Stones albums. I'm always proud to identify myself as a rock 'n' roller and I think that through me Abe was able to admit that rock wasn't all that bad. Not that I hate jazz. There's a difference between identification and a simple liking for something. Whatever I play, it's rock. I think I proved that last night [at Gateshead Sage].

## WILSON PICKETT "ENGINE NUMBER 9"

FROM THE VERY BEST OF WILSON PICKETT (REHIND) 1993

[Listens intently to the Intro] Funkadelic? [Vocals come in] Ah, it's the boss. Wilson Pickett. You thought you could catch me out by playing a later one, but once that voice kicks in there's no way it could be anyone else. With Wilson Pickett it's the voice. People are always trying to put him together with Otis Redding but that's a huge mistake. Wilson never cried on stage but Otis will blubber at the drop of a hat. Otis makes me laugh – no one wants to see your tears! But the

way they sing is different. Of course Otis sings his heart out, but there's a fundamental difference to what he's behind the voice. I don't mean it in a discriminatory way, but there's a quality of blackness to him that I find deeply appealing, the same with the blues.

**You've said that Wilson Pickett is one of your dream vocalists.**

I'd love to play together with him. My guitar playing would probably put him off at the start, but I would hope that in the end he would hear the gospel quality in my guitar tone, the sound of a soul weeping. It'd be like when Hendrix played in Little Richard's band and he got fired for being too loud on the top. That was Jim's fault, though – a musician should always be able to relate his music to the previous generation. There needs to be a dialectical relationship. I'm doing pretty well so far. You'll need to do better than that to trip me up.

## BLUE CHEER "SECOND TIME AROUND"

FROM KINGSBURY BRUNNEN (PROMAG) 1968

[From the moment the drums start] You're seriously asking me to identify this? [Laughs] Blue Cheer. "Second Time Around".

**You're hitting 100 per cent.**

If I hadn't got that, I would never have been able to live it out. No one's drums sound like that any more. You know the "oh yeah" from "Out of Focus" at the start of the second side? Just that a Japanese DJ who makes amazing use of that section. He has these drums [beats out a staccato rhythm], then he drops in the "oh yeah" and then he scratches the hell out of it, then back to the "oh yeah". It sounds amazingly cool.

**Was it the voice that first drew you to Blue Cheer?**

It's the mix of the sound. And the fact that they seem to isolate the different elements – everyone just plays as loud as they like. If the drummer wants to be heard, he has to hit the drums harder, or the guitarist can bring in some more amps. Recently I've noticed in soundchecks that everyone tries to adjust the sound so it can accommodate the quietest sounds. The moment you try to do that the music dies. You need to go the other way, to accommodate the loudest sounds. Of course volume has an effect on the mind and on the ears. Playing something too loud is like an accident, but music needs to encompass the accidental as well as trying to reduce the accidental to the minimum you just kill the music. I'm always saying this about improvisation, but if a musician lets the audience perceive a misplaced note as a mistake then they're dead. Lost. If you mess up the rhythm or whatever, then you've got to create something new from it. If you call yourself an improviser, that has always got to be your basic stance. I never turn the amp down when I play loudly by mistake. Everyone needs to adjust to that kind of accident, to play louder themselves. If you worry about the effect volume has on rhythm or harmony then you shouldn't be improvising to begin with. There are so many musicians who only want to improvise at tiny volumes, where every note can be heard clearly. They should all just go off to some desert island and do whatever they want. By playing music you are projecting out sounds, sounds which then interact with objects and cause them to vibrate. That's what music is, so surely you want to project your sounds as far as possible, to have them interact with as many objects as possible. If you insist on playing at low volumes, then you need to carry that idea in mind. That's enough provocation for now [laughs].

## FRANCO & OK JAZZ

### "SE PAMBA"

FROM GRANVILLE (PIRELLA GÖTTSCHE) 1967-68

You've got me now. I've got this at home but I'm not going to be able to tell you what it is. It sounds like calypso, no, hang on, it sounds more African. It's something early, pre-lingala pop, from the Congo, I would guess. Everyone from that period sings the same. Who is it?

**It's Franco & OK Jazz.**

It's a really early Franco piece, then, from the 50s. I've listened to more of his later stuff, from the 60s and 70s when the songs get much longer. There's a reason why I've been adding to so much lingala music, and it goes back to The Grateful Dead. I was listening to some of their long improvised pieces from the early 70s, from Live Dead onwards. The improvisations start getting longer and longer, but their songs get really bright and twinky. Up until then they'd been heavier, literally like a dark star. I don't take drugs, so I always assumed that it had something to do with whatever they were taking at the time. But now I think they must have just ripped off some lingala records. I love The Dead but that sound isn't their own. If you listen to some of those lingala records from 1970 to 1975 or 76, the ensemble playing and the guitar work are just unbelievable. Other stuff from Africa too – I was staggered when I heard [Ethiopian vocalist] Mohamed Ahmed for the first time, the bass sound on those records. I went back to listen to a lot of Ethiopian traditional music, and they've just transposed the same melodies on to electric instruments. When I first heard Ahmed's vocals, I knew that he'd been influenced by James Brown, so I listened to it as a twisted kind of soul. But now I can see that it's just traditional Ethiopian music with electric instruments. There's very little improvisation though. It's all songs. But when you get to the Congo stuff, lingala, the guitars are improvising all over the place, bright and giddy. But it's really relaxing to listen to. I often listen to it when I'm in the bath [laughs]. That guitar sound is like a massage for the brain.

## ANTONIN ARTAUD

### "SOUND EFFECTS AND MY CRY IN THE STAIRWELL"

FROM EN FIANCERIE AVEC LE JUGEMENT DE DIEU (OUR HORRA) 1947

[Harrowing screams and metallic clanking] I know that [laughs]. That was a really crap going sound and all the better for it. And I should have got that earlier. It's Artaud. If you listen to the voice, it still sounds very unpolished, unprofessional. He hasn't done enough work with his voice in order to project it properly. That was hard. How on earth do you go from Franco to Artaud? How can I like these two things equally? There's Franco probably singing about getting married and Artaud screaming about murdering God. Do you think Artaud could have developed this aspect of his creativity, if he hadn't died so early? That's difficult. I think that he realised he was dying. But it was as a poet that he chose to approach death with a radical absence of words. It's like the Bible: 'In the beginning was the word.' It's funny that the closer that Artaud came to death, the weaker his rejection of Jesus became. But he still utterly rejected Christianity. I think that at the end he moved away from 'In the beginning was the word' towards 'In the beginning was vibration'. That's a vital and fundamental realisation for any artist. If you can't grasp that, then you shouldn't even bother.

**When did you first come across Artaud?**

I was really young. Around 1970 there was a lot of

French literature published in Japan, including some things that never got republished now, like my favourite, Barbery D'Aureville. This was 30-odd years ago, when I was 22 or 23. I read famous stuff like [Tatsuhiko, first Japanese translator of De Saade, Breton and others] Shibuya's *Manual Of Poison and Manual Of Secret Societies*, but they were critical works and they just made me want to go back to the source. The first Artaud work I picked up was the prose poem book, *The Nerve Meter*. There's always a sense of synchronicity about these things, and Artaud took me back to Jim Morrison. Someone had written about Morrison exposing himself in Miami and how that related to his involvement with The Living Theater group, who were Artaud disciples. It all made sense to me, but obviously Morrison had been unable to fully digest what Artaud was talking about. He was still too young – these ideas came to him and he decided to do the most extreme thing without fully understanding what it meant. It would have been better for Morrison if he hadn't heard of Artaud until his forties.

## THE JACKS

### "MARIANNE"

FROM VEGAS (WOLFE) (KAPREKOS) 1968

[Listens to opening drum role] Is it a drum solo? [As the first guitar chord comes in] OK, that's enough. Jacks' "Marianne".

**Fushitusha covered this song on one of the Tokyo Flashback compilations. Why did you choose this song?**

[Jacks singer Yoshio Hayakawa has this line where he sings about doubting everything in order to believe. I can't remember the exact words, but anyway he's singing about doubting everything. And he's singing this line over this really cool and conventional chord progression. I like something by Peter Paul & Mary! But I got so into angry that I wanted to cover one of his songs. If you're honest about doubting everything, then at the very least you could make up your own chords, your own chord progression and your own rhythm. "Marianne" has lots of lyrics about calling up a storm, and I thought that I could bring up a better storm than he ever could. If you're calling up a storm then make your voice sound like one! [Laughs] I'm very critical of that group in particular. I always like to be perverse, so if everyone is praising a group, I'll criticise them. If they criticise it, I'll praise it. That allows me to stay neutral. People talk about objectivity, though that word itself suggests reverse discrimination.

## TUJIKO NORIKO

### "MUGEN RESSHA"

FROM MAKE ME HAPPY (MUSIC) 2002

I know this one too. It reminds me of that Hawaiian singer, Linda Phercia. I have this at home somewhere. I know that I've played with her, but her name won't come out. I'll have to apologise to everyone next time I meet them. I can see her face.

**You played with her...**

It's Nori-chen, Noriko Tujiko. I've seen her play three times, twice in Australia and once in Japan. How did you come to play with her? It seems like a very strange pairing, given that she's a laptop musician in her twenties.

We were at the same festival [What Is Music? festival in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne] in Australia last year. When you're in a foreign country you tend to talk with other Japanese musicians who are around. We talked a bit and decided to do something together. I'd never heard of her before. I think that she had heard my music before and it didn't annoy her. So we talked and played together, and it was all very natural.



**With the DJ events you've been doing, have you never been tempted to do a laptop set?**

I can't use computers. Which doesn't mean that I won't in the future. I might suddenly have a desire to use them, so I won't deny that existence for the moment. But sometimes they make me feel my age. Playing with Noriko was interesting because I was able to do something different from normal. She gave me the lyrics and we sang her song together. The promoter didn't even have a guitar amp ready for me, so I had to plug straight into the PA. With no rehearsal, no amp, no reverb. That's the real meaning of improvisation.

**Have you been impressed by any other young Japanese groups?**

I played with Airampo a couple of months ago and was impressed by their energy. They're very intelligent girls. Both of them are graduates of an art university and they know what they're doing. Everyone thought that gig would go horribly wrong, but it went fine. In situations like that, the one thing I say to the other group is that I hate playing in a jam session. I tell them to imagine that today I'm a new member of their group or that we're in a new unit for just one night. So for that one night Airampo were a trio. If they understand what I mean then the music always goes well. But I've played with so

many people that there are always ways and means. I can find a way to enjoy myself no matter what. Next!

**STUDIO DER FRÜHEN MUSIK  
"CHANTERAI POR MON CORAIGE"**  
FROM *MOUSQUADOURS - TROUVERES - MINNEWEL DELICES*  
1993, REC 1998-1994

[Immediately on hearing the rebec tone] Got it. It's [lutenist, medieval musicologist and Studio Der Frühen Musik founder] Thomas Binkley, isn't it? This is the record that first got me into medieval music.

**How did you come across this kind of music?**

I first heard it in a great secondhand record shop in Sukiyebashi in Tokyo called Hunter. I still remember the sense of shock I felt when it came over the speakers. I'm sure I must have frozen for a second as I was looking through the racks, then I rushed up to the counter and asked what it was. That droning sound of the rebec just dragged me straight in. Another customer had asked for it to be played, but my intensity scared them away. Medieval music has been immensely important for me. I remember some idiot once wrote that my hurdy-gurdy playing was influenced by some folk musician. I've been listening to medieval stuff since at least 1973. No one was into this kind of music back then. There was just this

one obsessive on the radio every morning, Tatsuo Minagawa. He had a show about Baroque music that started at 6:15! I had to get up early to catch his show because there was a period when he was playing nothing but medieval music. I remember trying to tune in – where we lived the reception was bad and it would fluctuate every time a plane would fly overhead, so I was doing contortions with the aerial and dial! Trying to adjust the dial accurately all those years ago has given me fingertip control over my signal generators. The effort I put in to listening to music! [Laughs]

**What else were you listening to?**

My other main listening at the time was Blue Cheer, Messiaen and John Lee Hooker. Like everyone else, when I was 17 or 18 I didn't have a lot of money for records so I had to choose carefully. My criteria were always that it had to be something I didn't know or it was cheap – I still buy records this way today. So I picked up Messiaen's *Quartet For The End Of Time* because it was cheap. Messiaen was an important discovery for me. It felt like someone had stuck a needle into my ears, less like a musical experience, more like physical pain or acupuncture. Taken to an extreme, healing and pain are the same thing. Anyway, it was probably the Christian element of his music that caused me pain. □

# A question of scale



"The only sound that's wrong is one that doesn't fit", Ornette Coleman

**Enlightening and mystifying by turns, Ornette Coleman's controversial theory of harmolodics – underpinning his music since 1972 – continues to lay siege to the Western harmonic system of fixed tones. In this rare backstage interview, Andy Hamilton cracks a chink in the harmolodic wall**

**How did you come up with that amazing melody for "Lonely Woman," which you played as an encore?**  
That was in the '50s – 1959 or something. I had gotten to New York, and I was there a long time by myself. One night I was playing somewhere, and I saw a man arguing with a woman. She was so helpless about how the conversation was going, I didn't try to interfere or anything. I just saw she was very sad. And my son and his mother had come to New York, and she had told me that I can't raise Denardo out here, I'm going back to California. Then I made a connection between what this guy was doing and what I was involved with, so I sat down and wrote this song.

**Was it based on a phrase that you improvised?**  
No, it just came to me at that time. I just heard it and wrote it – I just try to capture what I hear. I think music itself is an idea, it's not a style, it's not a race, it's just an idea. And everybody has ideas. That's why music is so free for people to cherish, and so open – because it's how the idea is affecting you, and how you express what it means to you, regardless of what the style is. I have always wanted to write music. I didn't realise that writing music, you have to be very popular to make a living out of it. I was rehearsing my different bands, with (drummer) Billy Higgins and those guys, but I had a tough time playing the music I was creating. I don't think people realised that I knew my music, (they thought) that I was just playing. But I never thought about trying to prove what I could do. I was always trying to have the experience of what I was doing. And so I wrote that song, and I think I recorded it on Atlantic.

**How did you get the idea of the drums playing double time against the saxophone?**

Playing fast? That's the tension that I see in all love conflicts. It's like time is running out, but you're standing still.

**It's so strong.**

It is. It's the cause and effect of emotion and distance. It's like having something in your head that's bothering you, and nobody knows it but you. It keeps occurring, but you can't do nothing about it. You can't satisfy it, you can't cure it, you can't punish it – you just know it's there. It wasn't a love story, it's just being a human being. I'm sure everyone sometimes gets lonely, isn't that right? It happens.

**You said you had a struggle to get your music accepted.**

I would say that.

**Was you always confident it would be accepted?**

No, I never thought about it being accepted. I was thinking about writing music that the person that liked music would enjoy. I wasn't trying to write music to make money, I was trying to write music to have some meaning to people.

**But still you wanted it to get out, to be heard.**

Yes, I wanted it to be heard. But I was having musicians that time telling me, "Oh, you can't play like that." I was being beaten up, my horn thrown away. I was saying, "Oh my goodness me, that's just crazy." I realised that whatever reasons the person had to make them treat me like that, it was what they had experienced [that made them do it] – that whatever they were doing, if they didn't succeed, why should I succeed? I was only just playing the way I'm playing right now. I have never tried to be different. It's like I'm sharing what I'm sharing with you.

**Why do you think that so many of the bebop musicians didn't understand what you were doing?**

I wouldn't say it was just the bebop musicians, it was musicians, period.

Because I found out that in Western culture – you have the Bb, the C, the Eb and the F instruments – those

are the four dominant transpositions. And yet one instrument has to transpose those other three notes for it to sound like one idea more than four different harmonies – and that's the piano. So all of a sudden I started understanding the role of the piano. The sound of the piano is not the note of the piano. [Plays a note on the piano] The note of the saxophone is different to the sound of the saxophone. The note that you hear is not the sound of the instrument. It's the idea of the notes that you hear being applied to the instrument.

To this very day, I've been working on a concept called *harmolodics*, which means that the four basic notes of Western culture are all the same sound on four different instruments. I call that *harmolodics*. So when I found that out, I started analysing what people call melody for ideas. But melody and ideas are not confined to any instrument... It's going to happen, but no one has come to the conclusion that you don't have to transpose an idea. But if you want to play with the piano... if you want to play an idea you have to do it.

**Does this explain why you haven't played with many pianists?**

Not at all, I mean, I haven't played with pianists because I haven't had anyone come about that wanted to play with me.

**But Peter Dink could play with you.**

Well... When Paul was playing with me regularly he was playing songs. But as you know, this group that was playing tonight, not only did the sound have different notes, but the resolution had different purposes. And yet they were working. Two basses, but they were not [playing] the same. They were like right and ditty, because one is playing a melody, another is transposing the concept of where that melody came from, in the form of its own idea. That's not known yet, but it's coming.

Coleman's discussion of transposing instruments gets him deep into harmolodic theory. The term "harmolodics" first appeared in print in his sleeve notes to *Sleaz of America* in 1972. It's a synthesis of "harmony," "movement" and "melody." Scarcely says that Ornette is a poet more than a theorist, and certainly when he began to play alto sax, he didn't realise that it's a transposing instrument – a C on sheet music for alto sax denotes a sounding Eb. On alto, like almost all woodwind instruments, we call the scale made by uncovering the holes one by one from the bottom up, the scale of C – even though in terms of sound, the scale begins on Bb for other reeds (Bb for sax, Eb for alto sax, and so on). As all these instruments have the same arrangement of holes, it makes sense to transpose the music, not the fingering. The "four dominant transpositions" Ornette refers to are typified by clarinet (Bb); flute, oboe and all string instruments (C); alto sax (Eb); and French horn (F) respectively.

As we'll see, Ornette seems to derive almost mystical significance from the fact of transposition and the apparent unicities that result – when piano and alto, say, both play C on the sheet music. Many writers are convinced that this is a simple misunderstanding. But Coleman associate John Szwed, quoted in *Peter Niklas Wilson's* excellent *Ornette Coleman: His Life And Music*, argues that when he refers to "unison," he doesn't just mean "the same pitch": "His unison is any group of notes that suddenly come together and have a purity of sound." As Niklas Wilson writes, the standards of Western music theory hardly apply to Coleman's musical thinking. Maybe when Ornette says here that "It's going to happen, but no one has come to the conclusion that you don't have to transpose an idea. But if you want to play with the piano... if you want to play an idea you have to do it",

**Ornette Coleman** was born in March 1930 in Fort Worth, Texas – the precise date is disputed, but his short UK tour in May was certainly a 75th birthday celebration. As he walked slowly onstage at the Sage in Gateshead, he looked a little frail but resplendent in a shiny powder-blue suit and something close to a pork-pie hat. But as the review of his London Barbican show (*The Wire* 256) made clear, although he sometimes performs sitting down, his playing hasn't lost its power and charge. His latest group returns to the two-bass format he's led occasionally since the late '60s, with Greg Cohen playing mostly pizzicato providing the groove, and Tony Falanga almost always arco and singing. His son Denardo Coleman, singing and explosive on drums, may now be understood – he's developed even since his work with Prime Time in the '80s. Ornette's vocalised alto sound is charismatic, and though his phrases were in some sense familiar, they're archetypes, not clichés; he also played a few rather brief and intriguing solos on trumpet and violin. Coleman made no announcements and I couldn't identify most of the compositions, but the encore was the classic "Lonely Woman", on which he played alto, then violin in a kind of string band treatment.

When I meet him backstage afterwards, the man who overturned modern music with his freedom principle is modest and quiet-spoken. But he wants to be in the discussion and is insistent on the validity of his ideas. This is someone who, though he's had lucky breaks, has faced scepticism throughout his long career and has needed all his determination and self-belief. The interview takes place in the company of James Jordan, Coleman's cousin and – it turns out – collaborator in harmolodic theory. We begin by discussing "Lonely Woman", which appeared on *The Shape Of Jazz To Come* (1960), the first of the series on Atlantic Records. These albums of the early '60s were radical in their "time no changes" approach – not live jazz in the accepted sense, but themes and variations, in which phrases follow their natural logic and not a standard four-bar format. Then we move on to the reception his work has received. Ornette has described elsewhere the sometimes violent reactions to his music in the early days – his reference to being beaten up most likely refers to an incident that happened while on tour in the South in 1949 with blues singer Clarence Samuel. In order to explain what his fellow musicians didn't understand – and often still don't, he maintains – Ornette turns to harmolodics, and shows he's still a man with a mission.

he's attacking the Western concept of fixed tuning – whether equal temperament or some other system. Harmolodics, in contrast, embraces flexible intonation, and so playing with a piano will be a restriction. Clearly Ornette has extreme sensitivity to nuances of timbre, and this may explain why he insists on distinguishing the sound and the note.

**You particularly seem to like having two bassists – even right back in the 60s you used Charlie Haden and David Izenzon.**

Well, that's what I'm saying, I never used the bass to back me up. I use it to open me up. I can get one movement from one [bass], and one resolution from the other, at the same time. It's amazing! You hear me doing it. I can actually be playing from what Greg's changes are, and Tony playing with the bow... That's Tony Falanga – he played with the St. Luke Symphony in New York. Oh man! It allows me to not only modulate, but modulate inside of two different people, without it sounding like it's a modulation. It sounded like I'm resolving ideas, and not modulating.

**When you say you wanted a bassist that would open you up and not back you up, do you think the problem is that most pianists want to back you up?**

Well, that's the rule. They lay out the plans of what road you're supposed to go down. But that's only because of singers. Singers cannot hear the resolution of a person modulating because of the chord, they can only do it because of the words – singing the words. But music is free of fitting words... If you play Cm7, Dm7, Dm7 – it covers 12 tones but one is missing. F#... It only works like that because of chords. [Plays the chords on the piano.] You can't use [F#] as an extension, it just doesn't fit anywhere... If C and E is a major third, and D and F is a minor third, which one is highest?

**C and E is the biggest interval, but F is the highest note.**

So you think the D is higher than the C and the E? Only by name, not by sound.

The reason why you say D and F [are higher] is that they're looking at F as being the fourth of C, but it's the minor third of D. It's a minor third, it's not a fourth. It has nothing to do with theory, it just has something to do with the notation of urson. There are lots of things in music like that.

**You have been writing a book about this.**

Yes, believe me it's coming out soon. My cousin here, James Jordan, he's going to help me get this book on the market.

**I hope that's so, because a lot of people will be very interested.**

Yeah... One thing I don't believe is hiding any information that can advance anybody... See how never tried to use this [my approach] to see what's wrong with it.

Believe me, the only sound that is wrong is one that doesn't fit. That's the only one that's wrong. It's not right or wrong because of the theory. [Plays more intervals on the piano]

**Do you think a lot of jazz players are too bound up by theory?**

I didn't say that, you said that.

**But you think they might be.**

I didn't say that either. But I tell you what I do think. I think that the interval-structure for a urson, according to the instrument that you play, let's say it's a piano... [plays flat fifth and major third intervals, repeats example "which is higher?"] How is anyone going to learn to play music if they know it by numbers? You can't.

**But a lot of jazz is taught by harmony.**

But harmony's numbers.

**You reject harmony then?**

It's not that I reject harmony, I reject having to be restricted because of ideas. This is C – what note is it in the bass clef? It's an E [reading the treble clef as if it were a bass clef].

**That's right.**

This is E and G in the bass clef, and in the treble clef it's C and E. And this goes to tell you that harmony, urson and keys are not based upon ideas, and they're not based upon mathematics – they're based upon sound.

**Could you summarise harmolodics by saying that? If somebody asks, "In a sentence, what is harmolodics?"**

Harmolodics is where all ideas – all relationships and harmony – are equally in urson. Say you were talking somewhere, and someone came in and started a different conversation with you, and you started your conversation with whatever they were talking about – that doesn't mean that whatever you were talking about before has left your mind. It only means that you've decided to answer this person. So therefore, to be more precise, how can you tell the meaning of something just because of the sound of your voice? **You can't.** Now we're talking, now we're talking. You can't do that. 100 years ago [sic], someone created this [the piano keyboard] and they made some rules, and the rules haven't changed since.

Coleman's question, "If C and E is a major third, and D and F is a minor third, which one is highest?", has me baffled. All I can say is that for him, the quality of a musical interval is more important than the relation of the interval to any possible key centre – as Charlie Haden once put it (again quoted in Nixie Wilson's book), there's a "constant modulation in the improvising", with no fixed key centre. When he goes on to mock the suggestion that he bends notes, his objection is probably that "bending" implies a criticism from the inappropriate standpoint of Western fixed tuning. From that standpoint, a saxophonist who bends notes is playing out of tune, and will clash with a fixed tuned instrument like a piano. In fact, on reflection, the description "bending" isn't quite right anyway. It implies that the pitch shifts as the note is played, whereas Coleman's notes tend to be stable – it's just that they're often sharp or flat in relation to the standard pitch of the scale. As he's said, he plays "sharp in tune, flat in tune". The point is brought out when he plays some blues phrases on the piano and says, "That's fixed, that ain't no blues" – blue notes belong in the cracks between the piano keys, so pianists can only offer an impression of them. Both bending and non-standard intonation are common jazz techniques.

**I know you said that it wasn't just bebop musicians that criticised you, but they were the ones that should have seen the connection with your playing.** Yeah, exactly.

**So why didn't they see it?**

[Plays more minor seventh chords] What I mean is that the same way that I can sit down and find things that sound as different in relationship to an idea, that's how what I'm talking about got started too. When you've decided to analyse something called harmolodics, and you find out that that note that's harmolodic is now another note that's giving a different idea, then that's what's going to happen. Because, let's face

it, it's only 12 notes, and all the music we ever heard is played by the same 12 notes.

**But you bend your notes?**

What do you call 'bend'?

**You play blue notes.**

No, no... [Jo James Jordan] Oh, this is something – you hear what he's saying?

James Jordan: That you bend them? [Laughs]

**On the piano you can't, it's true.**

Ornette Coleman: Sound has a grammar to it – believe me – that will cause that thing that you call bending to open up in a way you won't believe it.

**But to someone listening, it seems such a striking part of your playing, because it's so full of the blues. You say that, I don't think that. Oh... So wait a minute. Is there a blues that doesn't have to have a sadness to it?**

**Yes – a lot of the blues Charlie Parker played, for example.**

OK, but when you say blues, what do you mean?

**Well, I've got to think about it!**

Yeah, I know, I know... that's exactly right!

**I don't mean just 12-bar form.**

But when something hurts you, or disappoints you – when you catch your woman with another man, any of this stuff that beattles your truth... that's just someone treating you bad. That hasn't anything to do with the blues. But in sound grammar, we can express any form of emotion, of the deepest depth or the highest... Grammar is higher than any figure that has to do with emotion.

**I wouldn't say that all blues is sad, but it's emotional.**

Well, what I just said. In other words, the emotion, in some way, has no gender, it has no race, it has no goal, it has no purpose. It's only to let you know the state that's affecting you at the moment. It's true. You can go and be happy, and then hear something that makes you say, "Oh my goodness, I understand that" – that's a just how [sound] grammar affects you. The causes of sound grammar are what you call the blues. But the blues... [plays some blues phrases on the piano] that's fixed, that ain't no blues.

**But you can only approximate on the piano.**

Well, what you're saying is probably true. But you know it's only trying to imitate that [the vocal or instrumental blues].

**There are various tricks on the piano that you can use.**

Well yes, that's true... the flattened fifth and the minor third, that's right. But I know this – maybe what we call sound is so internal, that they're not using what it can do for us as human beings... Classical music is related to the past more than it is related to the creative part of sound. Like those songs that I'm writing, you can hear any kind of structure, classical, blues and whatever... The music I'm writing is not in any style, it's not in the style of jazz, classical, nothing. But you get all of that coming through, because of memory and the past. But I gotta go...

Catching Coleman by his coat-tails, I asked for his thoughts about his near contemporary, Lee Konitz – they're the two great post-Parker stylists in jazz. Konitz had commented that "I didn't get the message at first... I was trying to learn the rules, and he came along and just changed that all up. I thought, 'Wait a minute, is that sporting?' But there was another message that he had. And years later I finally acknowledged him for what he could do, which is a very special kind of music." It turns out that the admiration is mutual.





Harmonic hangeance Ornette Coleman at the Barbican, London, May 2000

PHOTO: MICHAEL O'NEILL

Coleman: 'I'll tell you a story that breaks my heart [he means - finds very touching]. I had a job in Italy a few years ago. And I always loved Lee Konitz's work, so I called him up and said, 'Lee, I'm playing in Perugia, and I'd like for you to be my guest.' [Later] I started playing "All The Things You Are" - I don't think he ever heard me play a standard! After he heard me play, he said, "OK, maybe I'll come up and play with you." So when we go to Perugia, I play my set, and I call him up. I said, 'Lee, why don't you come now and play, and you be the leader and I'll be the sideman.' And he came up, and he played and I played with him, I really enjoyed it. And you know what, [afterwards] he wrote me the most beautiful letter. I always loved his playing. He played a fantastic solo on "Disc Jockey Jump" - I can't remember who he was with, I think that's what it was, 40 years or more ago. I didn't have a horn then, I was just listening to saxophone players.

**Were you influenced by him in any way, do you think?**

When I was a teenager, he was playing not like Charlie Parker, but like himself. His own ideas - that's what I like. I always like ideas, more than styles.

**So that was an example for you, of someone who was independent.**

Yeah, that's right. I always thought that he wasn't getting the attention that he should have - I don't know why. And I just wanted to support him.

**He said to me that he admires you very much - but he didn't understand your playing at first, because you were upsetting all the rules that he'd learned, then later he understood.**

Believe me, we are very good friends, and whatever he says, that's fine.

With a piano at hand, Coleman has another try at explaining the harmonic message. His final comment makes it seem that it's not just fixed tuning, but equal temperament that's his target - the post-Bach system of major and minor keys, a little older than the "300 years" Coleman refers to, according to which blue notes would be deviations. When he concludes by saying, "When you think of 88 keys, and it's only 12 notes, that should tell you something," he seems to be suggesting that the Western system is constricting. But the point shouldn't be overstated - Coleman uses the key system as far as it suits him, it's just that he's flexible in his approach. For him, the 12 fixed notes are an approximation of the wealth of possibilities. First he plays an E on a piano...

Coleman: is this 'E', or the sound of the piano?  
**I have to think about it.**

No, please don't think - it ain't going to happen. What is the difference between the sound of the piano and the note of the piano?

**You mean the note's an idea and the sound's an experience?**

No, no, you're talking intellectually - I'm just talking about facts.

[Plays a note again] It's a sound that has been applied to the piano, to represent a concept of other instruments playing in unison with the piano. The piano doesn't transpose. Believe me, the sound of the instrument is not the note of the instrument.

**Is this because the Western classical tradition has messed this up?**

They are not responsible, this is just an invention that's happened in the last 100 years. But we all are victims of this - because when you think of 88 keys, and it's only 12 notes, that should tell you something. Right? □ Thanks to Ros Rhye at Gatehead Sage, Lewis Porter and Paul Broom



# Faun fables

Drawing on psychedelia's childlike bliss and Techno's electronic transmutations, Animal Collective have developed a uniquely woozy soundworld, winning over audiences with their shamanistic live presence. We track these Mother Nature's sons to their sylvan lair, and talk to the latest addition to the Collective's Paw Tracks label, Ariel Pink's Haunted Graffiti

**Words:** Simon Reynolds. **Photos:** Chris Buck

**Animals, anthropomorphism and animism** are common preoccupations in psychedelic music. Think of Syd Barrett with his *Wind in the Willows* obsession, his worship of trees and ditties about effervescent elephants and a mouse called Gerald; or Incredible String Band's songs about hedgehogs, papples, snakes and immortals. The four members of American group Animal Collective revel in the natural world: their record label is named Paw Tracks, their song titles include "Penguin Penguin," "Bat You'll Fly," "Who Could Win A Rabbit" and "We Tigers." David Portner thinks the obsession relates to "the wild aspect of when we play live—it's kinda animistic," while Josh Dibb reckons it relates to the kind of stoned down, bulbative communion you can experience with cats and dogs. When Dibb talks about his mother, a holistic healer, her outlook sounds precisely how you'd imagine Animal Collective's worldview: a pantheism in which the cosmic and the mundane intermingle. "She was very supportive of the idea that I could find beauty and wonder — or, if you wanna call it that, God — in everything," he says. "She experiences God as anything from the debets that any given religion across the world has, to our pets. She totally worships our animals."

If it's a truism that she experiences — handspan, heartbreak, neurosis — makes for great music, Animal Collective are one of the rare exceptions that proves the rule. Their music is rooted in happiness. David Portner (whose collective "character" name is *Avey Tare*), Noah Lennox (*Panda Bear*), Brian Weitz (geologist) and Josh Dibb (*Deakin*) grew up together in an environment verging on paradise. For the bulk of their pre-college years they attended "progressive" schools that emphasised creativity, imagination and artistic self-expression as part of "a complete kind of education", as Lennox puts it. The kernel of the group formed when the teenage Portner, Dibb and Weitz bonded at a small private school in Baltimore County, Maryland, near the U.S.'s East Coast. Noah Lennox would join the gang at weekends, having already formed a close friendship with Dibb at an even more hippyish elementary school. Much of Baltimore County consists of woods and farmland, and Portner recalls idyllic times spent at his cousin's 20-acre farm and nights listening to music under the stars on friends' back porches. Even the high school was situated in fields, allowing the gang to go on nature walks during lunch breaks.

For fun, ribbiting against their upbringing, then, Animal Collective have essentially tried to live up to its values. You sense that they carry the blessed beatitude of their pretty unusual adolescence within them: it's what nourishes their music and informs the whole sensibility of their Paw Tracks label. Like a spinney full of rare wildflowers circumscribed on all sides by housing developments and road building, this inner resource is both precious and precarious. Because the way of the world will wear it away. "I feel very much like the space I've created with these guys as friends came out of high school," confirms Dibb. "It's also trying to figure out a way to continue the total playful improvisation you had when you were five years old. Comparing it to how you feel as an adult, I equate it to almost like being high all the time. Music is the most powerful means I have to find that again."

Music making began for the four friends during their high school idyll. Early attempts at forming a group ran in parallel with each of them making recordings

individually on tape. Portner introduced them to the buzz of synthesizers — the enigmatic song titles, the opaquely evocative artwork. From folk indie rock, the friends quickly progressed to the noise cassette micro-scene of the Pacific North West, centred on outfits like Climax Golden Tunes and Noggin. Then, via their love of horror soundtracks such as *Tape Hooper* and Wayne Bell's incidental music for *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, they discovered 20th century classical music. "Ligeti and Penderecki are on *The Shining* soundtrack," recalls Portner. "We had never heard so-called experimental music at the time, we didn't know that people made music with textures and pure sound. So we started doing that ourselves in high school, walls of drones with guitars and delay pedals and us screaming into mics."

Real life gave this teenage cocoon a hard knock in the late 80s when the future members of Animal Collective dispersed to college. For Portner, especially, his three years at NYU felt like pure misery. But although the group were scattered between New York and Boston, they kept the music alive, discussing what they wanted to do sonically and investigating all kinds of arcane. In parallel with his environmental policy and marine biology studies, Brian Weitz hosted a noise show at WQCR, Columbia's college radio station. "We'd borrow all the avant garde records and take them to Brian's dorm room and listen to them all night," recalls Portner. "It wasn't academic stuff to us. In fact it was more lightweight music than rock 'n' roll, in a way, because you could imagine a sound as a weird animated character." Adds Weitz, "It was never 'listen to those microtones', it was, 'That sounds like a bird!' In Boston, meanwhile, Lennox was exploring electronic music, a passion ignited back at boarding school when he moved into a room whose previous occupant had left behind a bunch of records, including The Orb's *UFO30*.

The friends found each other again in the summer of 2000, converging at Portner's apartment on Prince Street in downtown New York for several months of exploratory jamming using antiquated synths, acoustic guitars and household objects. "If you got tired of playing an instrument you could go and get a rock and a plate!" laughs Weitz. The nascent Animal Collective sought a sound that would organically mesh their diverse interests, from Portner's and Weitz's love of horror movie scores to Lennox's Techno penchant, and their shared passion for vocal harmonies. "We'd try to approach playing an acoustic guitar like you were making Techno," recalls Portner. "It wasn't a very big apartment but we'd work with space a lot, setting up this stereo microphone and an amp on the other side of the room. So it became less about delivering a song than occupying a space."

Sadly, the copious tape documentation of this summer-long "drunken haze and hash haze" was stolen when Portner moved apartments. Unwarily, the friends packed up the car the night before to make it less stressful on the day, in the process learning a traumatic lesson about leaving belongings in a parked vehicle. Still, as Lennox puts it, "Everything since then has been a variation of what we explored that summer. Dave and I had already made the *Spirit* They're Gone record, but during the summer we really cracked the egg open. It seemed like we could go anywhere we wanted after that."

Although it's now regarded as the first Animal Collective release, *Spirit They're Gone*, *Spirit They're*

*Washed* was originally credited to just *Avey Tare & Panda Bear*. As its title hints, *Spirit* is ethereal psych-folk that finds a gorgeous diagonal between transcendental and twee. Songs like "April And The Phantom" and "Everyone Whistling" bring to mind Tyranosaurus Rex twinking out on nitrous oxide. The album explores the disorientation potential of high frequencies, its sound palette largely consisting of acoustic guitar "juggled to create this fluttering feeling," says Portner. Lennox's skittering drums, clamping and fluttering keyboards, and the duo's high-pitched harmonies. "We started singing in this way where we'd end every phrase with clicks and it was like we were creating these almost electronic sounds with our voices," says Portner. "And we could record it in a way where you wouldn't know what were the voices and what were the other instruments. We like sounds to come into the room and play with your ears. Confusion is always a good thing in music!" *Spirit* certainly confused the first distributor they sent it to. "Southern Records called us back immediately and said, 'Is there something wrong with this? This music makes our dogs run out of the room!'"

The next emanation from the Collective camp — *Avey Tare, Panda Bear & Geologist's* 2001 album *Danse Manatee* — was the first swerve in an aesthetic journey that typically involves the group reacting against its previous release. "This Heist meets Incredible String Band" is the description one record shop assistant gave me of this record. Amazingly, *Danse Manatee* fully lives up to such an intrigue-piquing sales pitch, melding these seeming incompatibles into a delicious delirium of songfulness and abstraction. In 2001, the group also made (but didn't release until later) the stepped down *Campfire Songs*. Recorded on a back porch in the open air, the album's strumming troubadour vibe is the only time Animal Collective have truly interacted with the neo-folk scene.

Animal Collective's real aesthetic kismet at this point were New York based abstract sound outfits Black Dice and Gang Gang Dance. "We started to find a bit of a community," says Portner. The three groups still share a Brooklyn rehearsal space and play gigs together regularly. Although they are very different entities, all have a commitment to — and reputation for — turning gigs into events, with a vibe that's electric, verging on shamanistic. "Our way of doing that was wearing masks, to portray the names we had," explains Portner. According to Dibb, the masks and make-up weren't theatrical (à la *Cavendish Rainbow*, an outfit AC are often compared to), but something they did for themselves more than the audience, a way of signaling they were crossing into a "special space". More recently, though, AC have dropped the dressing up, except for Geologist, who still sports a headlamp of the type worn by miners and spelunkers. Usually decorated, the lamp has a practical as well as ritual function. When it comes to stage lighting, AC prefer their shows to be as dark as possible, and Geologist needs the headlamp so he can see the mimes and mixer controls he uses to warp and addle the other members' playing.

The unique vibration between the four friends was only seriously tested for the first time when Black Dice invited Animal Collective to accompany them on tour in early 2002. "It was our first big tour, going through the South of the US, and pretty brutal," recalls Portner. "Lots of sleeping on floors. We all lost our minds on that tour." Lennox, the most sensitive of the quartet,



suffered particularly. "Noah's always had this love/hate thing about playing music with us. He's the most tourney and homebodyed. After every tour, he always has this breakdown period, where he's like, 'I don't wanna play any more, guys, I need to do my own thing.'"

Fortunately, this fraught period resulted in what many regard as the group's masterpiece. Here Comes The Indian. Returning exhausted from the Deep South tour, Animal Collective immediately started writing the material in their cramped and cluttered Brooklyn precinct space. "The darkness of that period, it all related to space, in a literal and a metaphorical way," explains Wertz. "We were in this cramped room, equipment everywhere, not soundproofed, so noise from other bands came through the walls." It was also the first time all four members had worked on a record together, Wertz elaborates, "so there were issues of trying to find your space in the music." Poverty and the fact that Lennox and Portner shared an apartment and had the same day job (working at the Manhattan record store Other Music) exacerbated the sensation of claustrophobia. Then the group embarked on another cabin-festish tour before returning to record HCTI in the summer of 2002 — "The absolute heart of that darkness," as Wertz puts it. "That's why the album's so hectic and chaotic. It was trying to shake all this weird energy into one recording."

Vocal extremism is an Animal Collective hallmark, and Here Comes The Indian teems with unhinged incantations, amekistic throat noise, heavily processed voices and grotesque latitudes of harmony. The standout track "Panic," made almost entirely out of vocal sounds, seems like an attempt to capture the vertigo and paralysis of an anxiety attack. But it also transmits something of the original Ancient Greek meaning of panic: a transport of ecstasy-through-terror. It's a bit like Tim Buckley's blissed voceseque "Starsailor" turned inside out. "Panic" is based off a vocal thing Dave and I did in my old bedroom in a kind of Indian style," Portner stammered across the eerie duetation on a mandolin and persuaded the group to take it to the next level, adding a swarm of vocal overdubs and feeding them through effects.

During this troubled time, the collective pressure cooker was further stoked by Lennox having to deal with his father's terminal illness. He began working on what would become the 2004 Panda Bear album *Young Prayer*, a tribute and elegy to his dad. "It was a gift for him. And he did get to hear the roughs of the album's songs, if not the finished version. That was recorded in the room he actually died in, so it was especially intense. With *Young Prayer*, I wanted to tell him that he had taught me really well. I wanted to be like, 'It's been really good hanging out and learning from you, you've been a really good man and set a good example.'" Apart from fitting the record's sentiment, the liturgical title suits the psalm-like purity of Lennox's singing, influenced by his high school stint in a choir club. "It was an extraordinary thing, but I would stay after school to do it because I loved it so much."

After finishing *Here Comes The Indian*, the frayed Collective dispersed for a while (Geologist even moved to Arizona for a while year). Their next record, *Sung Tongs*, was another *Away From Panda Bear* project (although it was credited to Animal Collective, the group having reluctantly submitted to the market logic of having a consistent brand identity). *Tongs* veered

away from the studio-laboured intensity of HCTI to a more song-focused and lighter-hearted approach. Portner's and Lennox's acoustic guitars occupied the center of the sound. "Every song or group of songs we did has its own tuning, and they're usually open tunings," says Portner. "With acoustic guitars especially, the strings resonate really well, and when the tones are similar, you almost get more tones than are actually there. It makes it really warm." Yet the inspiration for this approach wasn't the new acoustics of minstrels like Devendra Banhart, but electronic music. Standout track "Visiting Friends," says Portner, was influenced by Kompakt's Pop Ambient compilations and Mike Ink's project Gas. "Just like a walk of hums. We wanted that feeling, but with acoustic guitars."

*Sung Tongs* revolved risk in certain quarters for being a bit blithe and fake. Yet the essence of Animal Collective, what makes them so remarkable, is the way they collapse polarities: they can be sacred and whimsical, cosmic and cute, noisy and pretty, all at the same time. In this sense, they are true inheritors of psychedelia's imperative towards confusion: the bringing together of things usually kept separate.

At the heart of psychedelia lies the ideal of being "lost" — lost in sound, lost for words. Portner claims that the group don't assign words like "sacred," "pagan" and "mystical" to their music. "People often say to us, 'You guys have a shamanistic, ritualistic thing going on at your shows,' as if we had all got together one time and said, 'Let's all be shamans!'" Yet Animal Collective have talked candidly and eloquently about their spiritual leanings in the past. When I press them on the subject, it turns out that it's another facet of their beaific Baltimore County upbringing. As previously stated, Josh Dibbs's mother Jessica is a syncretist of many forms of spiritual practice and alternative medicine. She has influenced not just her son's worldview, but the whole Collective's vision. "In college, Noah and I went through really tough times," recalls Portner. "So Josh said, 'My mom might be able to help you clear your mind and get back on track.' And she was like, 'Well, you know, what you need to do, you need to just breathe. Most people on earth don't take in enough of the oxygen that their mind and body needs.' I started doing these breathing exercises with her, and it makes your body feel crazy, it just goes through your whole body. She started doing it with Noah too. It totally cleared everything up, gave everything this calm."

Perhaps Animal Collective should consider putting Dibbs's mom on a retainer and have her accompany them on tour and into the recording studio, judging by the way the stresses of success seem to affect them. Time compression has interfered with their free "n" easy approach to creativity, a problem exacerbated by the fact that Lennox has married a Portuguese girl and now lives in that country. But they set aside a whole month to do nothing but record the much anticipated follow-up to *Sung Tongs*, relocating to Seattle and working with producer Scott Colburn of Climax Golden Twins.

It's a bitter irony for musicians: the thing you choose as an alternative to having a career spirals to the point where it turns into a career, bringing with it all kinds of sucking ancillary obligations like doing press. "Collage," a seemingly throwaway ditty on *Tongs*, has assumed unexpected resonance as an anthem for slackers looking to step off the career track. "Nu

don't have to go to college," the lyric counsels, which translates as "message to you, boogier, don't worry about your future, be here now." Says Wertz, "The response to that song has been amazing. People at kids scream for us to play it and we get emails from kids asking for advice." Mind you, there was one guy who got passed off with AC for playing college gigs where only students get entrance, acridly quipping, "So now I can't see you unless I go to college?"

The members of Animal Collective are too hard-working to be considered dropouts, but there is something hippylike about them, from their love of Mother Nature to the way they'll talk about a song as "a sweet jam." Their messianic devout following has something of this quality of early-twentieth-century men with beards, which may be why some unkind folks diss them as a Deadhead-style jam band, a hipster Phish. Portner, in particular, was a huge fan of The Grateful Dead as a youth, and talks about aspiring to create the same sense of electric communion between group and audience. At the same time, AC are at pains to distance themselves from the new folk revival, stressing the role of electronics and effects in their music. Odd, then, that their latest release, the Prospect Hummer EP, sees them hooking up with the new folk icon, nose-pierced, bearded, and wearing a touchstone icon for her Devendra Banhart's and Joanna Newsoms — as much for her free-spirited life as for her music.

A huge fan of The Incredible String Band, Portner checked out *Buryan's* 1970 LP *Just Another Diamond Day* after learning that Robin Williams played on it. "Immediately I was like, 'Wow, I can listen to this record when I have a hangover, or when I want to go to bed.' It's such a soothing, pretty record." Through the auspices of *Four Tet's* Kieran Hebden, who has also been working with *Buryan*, Animal Collective met her in Edinburgh. Soon the idea of a collaboration was mooted. *Buryan* says she fell in love with the group's music "instantly," captivated by its "inventiveness and humour." Hummer isn't a fully fledged collaboration, though. It's billed as an Animal Collective release and *Buryan* is singing songs written by Portner and Lennox. Nonetheless, it feels like the EP's beaific radiance emanates from the singer as much as the songs.

"My daughter says she can hear me smiling on the title track," says *Buryan*, "and I was, I loved having the freedom to sing as I wanted. I was still finding my voice after burying it for years." The experience has encouraged *Buryan* to embark on her first album in more than 30 years, due on Fat Cat before the end of 2005.

The other current AC release is situated at the further end of the group's sound spectrum. Jane is Lennox's techno project with his DJ friend Scott Mou, and Berserker, a four track album, features his gaseous vocals wafting over warmly pulsating electronics. There's a twist, though — most of the music is Mou spinning records made by other people. "It's like a mix CD with toasting over the top," says Lennox, who is confident that despite the music consisting mostly of "other people's backing tracks and rhythms, we make the songs our own because the way we move from track to track is unique." When I tell him his cloud-drift vocals remind me of Robert Wyatt's scuttler excursions such as Matching Mole's "Instant Puss," Lennox says he's honoured by the comparison, then pre-empt the next flattering reference point I had lined up. "Do you know Arthur Russell? I first heard that guy's records a year or so





At home with Ariel Pink

ago, after we did the Jane stuff, but I was like, 'woooo, I sound like this dude.' I felt sort of bad!"

One of Animal Collective's many tours took them to the West Coast, and in the aftermath of a show, a young man approached Portner and handed him a tape. "It sat on the floor of the van for a week or so," recalls Dibb. "Finally we played it and we were just like 'Woah! Brian was, like, 'I'm making it my goal in life to put this kid's record out on our label!'" Most artist-run labels go wrong immediately by signing groups that sound just like them (but aren't as good). Ariel Pink doesn't sound anything like Animal Collective, but by tapping into a similar magical, transcendental feeling he totally fits the Paw Tracks "vibe." "Ariel's created his own world for himself," says Portner. "That was the first thing we picked up on."

Ariel Rosenberg, the one-man band that is Ariel Pink, echoes this idea when he talks of his desire to "make new worlds." The *Dodruma/Vital Pink*, his first release for Paw Tracks, certainly sounded like a transmission from another realm. Upsettingly, if you scan the uniformly adulatory reviews for *Dodruma*, you'll notice that the same metaphor has occurred to virtually every writer — the Ariel Pink sound as some variation on a broken or badly tuned radio. Listening to the album on its release last year, an almost identical image entered my brain: a wireless heard from the bottom of a swimming pool, diffracted and reverberant.

The uniformity of this response suggests that maybe this is what Rosenberg was actually trying to do. But he insists it's just a side effect of his technical limitations, the antiquated eight-track tape recorder he uses. "If you chop off the frequencies at the top and bottom that's what you get — a compressed signal from a cheap radio." He claims he's "just trying to shine through" the lo-fi snarl. "Shining through" certainly captures the way his gorgeous melodies peek like watercolor sun shafts through the mist of hiss.

"Radio" probably recurs as a description because Ariel Pink's sound conquers the foggy wordiness of pop music when you first encounter it as a child — most likely through a tiny transistor. The term that springs to mind is "indiscernable listening." As I recall it, there's a threshold beyond which you learn to listen "properly." Prior to that, the young ear doesn't really differentiate between strands of sounds. I can distinctly recall acquiring the perceptual acuity to isolate the bassline in songs. On one level, this is obviously an

enrichment; on another, you lose that rapturous swiftness of pop hitting the virgin ear as a blur of exciting sound. Perhaps psychedelia, with its effects and saturated timbres, is partly an attempt to recover that blissed indistinction.

Ariel Pink's music suggests a different kind of indiscernable hearing, too: the child's capacity to listen without prejudice, before it has any inkling of "cool" and "uncool." Rosenberg's melodies, keyboard lines and guitar riffs hark back to long-lost styles of music made primarily for the radio — soft rock, blue-eyed soul and pop rock; performers like Steve Miller Band, ELO, the late-day Blue Oyster Cult. In other songs, he'll have you flashing on forgotten new wave one-hit wonders like It's Immaterial or Men Without Hats. But rather than AM radio (in America, popper in context and poorer in signal than FM), Rosenberg says it's MTV that shaped his pop sensibility. An addict from the age of five, he watched the channel almost from its inception. "MTV was my babysitter!"

Like his tape music hero R. Stevie Moore, Rosenberg has made so much music, he could keep an entire classic rock radio station (or oldies-oriented video channel) going for at least a month. Recorded from the late 90s onwards, some of the backlog has seen limited release via tiny labels. Rosenberg would like to put all of it out but the sequence is already jumbled. There are five whole albums between *Dodruma* (number two in the original sequence) and his glorious "new" album on Paw Tracks, *Worm Cop* (number eight).

Beneath the glittering fog of Echoes and corroded wooziness caused by dumping tracks and overdubbing, Rosenberg's playing seems disconcertingly high caliber. He insists it's all "smoke and mirrors, an illusion I create through editing. I do edits with my toe while playing the instruments, and can build up impressive musical lines in tiny increments." His most remarkable treasure (the lo-fi test) is the drum sounds, which are all created using his mouth. "It's like tongue-clicking: I've got certain places I hit in my mouth," he explains, before demonstrating his kick drum, snare, hi-hat, and tom-tom sounds. "The vocals and the drums are actually the easiest part of the recording process. But I'm probably flexing muscles I was never meant to use!"

If gorgeous tunes like "Among Dreams", "For Kate I Wait" (in love song to Kate Bush) and "The Ballad of Bobby Pyn" had been recorded "correctly," with proper drums, you can easily imagine them as huge Billboard

hits — perhaps not in the pop market of 2005, but in whichever radio era each song's stylization refers to. Rosenberg's versatility is astonishing. It's especially noticeable with his vocals, which run the gamut from Roy Orbison-like falsetto to Hall & Oates-style rock 'n' soul. "I'll do different vocal affections to see what kind of song I'll get. It's all pretends, it's all trying to find something. The style is almost unintentional. Because nothing is 'dry', because the instruments all go through crappy effects boxes, I'll put a chorus sound on the guitar and suddenly it begs to be played like Christopher Cross!" Pink can occasionally come over like a pop formalist, a pasticheur à la Chris Isaak or Marshall Crenshaw. But most of the time, the stylization of any given song is flooded by a passion that feels not just real, but ecstatic and transcendent.

Two "Trepentant Earths", the 11 minute song suite that starts *Worm Cop*, it's simply one of this decade's most shatteringly emotional pieces of music. Veering from melodic Rick Springfield-like passages to noisy blowouts including a middle edit that features a half-buried "Eight Miles High" citation, the song is dramatic too, in the classic rock radio tradition of "Don't Fear The Reaper": the kind of drama that doesn't wear out with reiteration. Great pop songs have a mysterious capacity for repetition unequalled by any other artform. They're closer to drugs than culture, Rosenberg reckons. "You can 'take' them every time and experience that high."

This neo-psychedelic notion of music is the point of convergence between Ariel Pink's "radio mysticism" and Animal Collective's pantheistic awe. Seeing with the enchanted eyes of a child (or hearing with the bliss-delirious ears of a child, in Ariel's case) is one aspect of the psychedelic quest. (Disorientation, ego-death and eclipse of reason being the darker side: Syd Barrett, Roky Erickson, et al.) "As you get older, you start to lose the child's ability to create visions and have hallucinations and imagine you're somewhere else than you really are," argues Portner. Music, for Animal Collective and Ariel Pink alike, isn't "this dry, 'sound' thing," he says. It's all about dreams and flight. "Maybe our music is escapism — a different world that people can go into." □ Animal Collective's Prospect Hammer EP is out now on Paw Tracks (USA) and Fat Cat (Europe). Jane's Benseker and Ariel Pink's Haunted Graffiti's Worm Cop are available on Paw Tracks





# Boy in a bubble

Digital avant funk sound boffin and flamboyant vocalist by turns, Jamie Lidell's live appearances are spectacular feats of improvised technology and showmanship. On the release of his first album in five years, he reveals the thinking behind his current 'godson of soul' stance, and why he wants out of the electronic 'space race'.

Words: Rob Young. Photos: Dirk Lindner



The club on London's Oxford Street is full to overflowing. A disembodied swing band is triggered from the PA speakers, a nonsensical tootle. And here's Jamie Lidell now, singing about embracing little illusions, how they help to stop your confusions.... If Lidell had his own TV variety show, this snappy doo-wop number would be the theme tune. It's slick but far from contrived; labradorish funkiness bordering on mania. "Back to the bubble!..." he recites for me when I mention these thoughts, about 12 hours later, as he settles into a leather sofa and scarfs down a bowl of soup in a bar in Shoreditch, East London.

"Exactly. I always thought that, as well. Because at the end of the song it's like, 'Now is the time I long for every night/The time when my mind will take flight' and actually, yeah, I feel really good when I sing those lines before I'm about to do a show, because I can put on a little bit of a Vegas vibe. I'm not a pro. If I was, I'd be coming out and givin' the mask, but I'm quite glad I'm not like that, because then I couldn't do my stuff the way I do it."

As anyone who's seen a Jamie Lidell show over the past few years knows, it's a constant source of surprise and delight, best jagged and some sleight-of-hand. He's possessed, he seethes, game, fierce. Scrambling for high notes, his face nearly splits apart. He'll build a rhythm track from nothing, looping his spontaneous beatboxing into furious electronic splices (once he even sampled the audience clapping and converted it into the snare drum). One minute he'll be standing behind his bank of gear in a shirt and slacks, the next he'll pop up clad in a dayglo jacket bristling with videotape, slucking his voice into two or three mics jacked into an array of differently pitched vocoders—drawing songlines with a handful of colour graders. Or he'll doo-dle at the low end of an analogue synth for ten minutes and hold an audience entranced. Pablo Fiasco, who for years has supplied the "chaotic glam" sets of live video, controlled Super-8 cyruses, performance art and films jammed together from library footage, might perform a mock coronation, covering Lidell's bonce with a gold mortarboard helmet whose chinstrap is tricked out with a tiny videocam, which cataputs you straight up Lidell's nose as he sings cross-eyed into the lens and his face is blown up on a giant video screen behind. Then, just when you've been bombarded into shellshock from a beatbox barrage, he'll break it down, spread a broad grin on his face and trigger the beating track to a song like "Isn't This Time," a ridiculous, almost religious ballad that could have come from the barynx of Al Green or Smokey Robinson. And he'll climax by collapsing behind the mixing desk before Pablo rescues him, JB-style, by draping him in a cape of cassette tape.

"Sometimes you really need that peacock flavour that showmanship's about," Lidell says, jutting the flamboyance. "It sometimes helps to look down at yourself and go, 'Whoa, I'm not the guy that was sitting backstage a few minutes ago drinking water, I'm this other person, on stage, doing a stage show.' I don't mind dancing so much, I feel less inhibited when I'm not 'me.' It's part of the cabaret of going out."

Jamie Lidell may be way too young to be called the godfather of soul, but he sure as hell is in the running to qualify as a godson. After a decade's dedication

that's taken him from London's shuddering underground Techno parties to playing a central role in the Brighton-based Trash/No Future collective, via the formation of digital avant funk duo Super Collider with Cristian Vogel (during which time he rediscovered a singing voice he'd kept hidden since school days), to his current base among a thriving artistic community in Berlin, and an imminent appearance at the Montreux Jazz Festival, Lidell's time has certainly come around. Now he's poised with some hard choices to make about the future.

To audiences who've fallen in love with those performances (and that's all they've had to grow on, in the absence of any records since 2000's *Middleman Gear*), his new release, *Multiply (Warp)*, will take some getting used to. At first listen it's a curious and somewhat garish cascade of styles: lurching from wibbly 80s Cameo disco synth ("When I Come Back Around"), Fela Kuti/James Brown swine ("Newme"), Shuggie Otis/Stevie Wonder soulfulness ("What's The Use"), multivoiced Prince/Funkadelic ("A Little Bit More"), and even a touch of The Pop Group's claustrophobic dissonance ("The City"). Arresting, the title track and "Music Will Not Last" have lovely constructed Drifters/Four Tops-style harmony vocals, and production that appears to be blatant homage to the soul/R&B clank and grind of Sam & Dave, Sam Cooke, Otis Redding, Smokey, Marvin Gaye, Sly Johnson, et al. The first time I heard the album, it wasn't the Lidell I knew. Then I saw him on stage again, up to his old tricks, and it hit home how impossible it would have been to translate what the jazz-obsessed singer tellingly calls "the scrapple" of his live improvisations convincingly on CD. "I've tried," he pleads, "but there's no way I could repeat something from another show. I've often fallen into traps, trying to cheekily pretend that I'm doing it again fresh—but it never works twice. I realised that I just don't turn on a lot of electronic music in the morning and go, 'That's what I wanna hear right now....' I was just honest with myself, listening to [recordings of] my live shows and thinking, 'I wouldn't want to listen to this—it wouldn't do me any favours to release it like this.' I just wanted to make an album that would be dressed up and ready to go, but very much a morning listen."

He's also had enough of the tendency in electronic music to work at technical innovation for its own sake. That "space race" approach to glitching out beats, so hard and frantic, is very much a battle thing. It's played itself out for me. I think there were so many people doing it well, it was time to find another angle. With this album I consciously decided I wasn't going to time-stamp it deliberately, just for the sake of it. Everyone's like, 'This isn't the 70s, why are you doing a retro album?' Stop hassling me! Unless it's part of the songwriting process from the beginning, editing post-writing gives a certain glitch aesthetic that I feel is played out. I don't particularly feel the urge to go there. I'll let people do that after the event, with the remixes—I wanted to contribute to the world of new songs. I wanted to write songs that were basic, and afterwards they have the potential to be turned into these modern monsters." He explains how he originally intended *Multiply* as a double pack with a live DVD, "uncut, fully raw, impossible to recreate," he says. In the end, the project looked too expensive,

although he still intends to issue a DVD further down the line.

So, instead of a lone grapple with the scrapple, Lidell invited a bunch of his friends to help him scrape away the coal dust encrustations from his songs, to reveal the precious stones beneath. "The community aspect of music is really lacking nowadays," he complains. "I need other musicians around me now. Berlin is the backdrop to this album. We would be playing in tiny bars, jamming songs, it's such a good time, and I'm singing and wailing, people are really feeling that. It rubs off on you, and I wanted to bring a bit of that to the album."

White boys singing soul is doggy territory—usually signifying execrable fakery. Lidell's fighting to reclaim some of the passion and the pain, the ecstasy of delivering, and he has a very un-English way of grabbing it and holding it tight. In the language of American psychobabble, Lidell owns it.

"The city it don't like you/It never did, never did/Won't stop, won't stop/Till it's got you on your knees" Jamie Lidell, "The City"

*Multiply* draws its energy from the convection currents and stress fractures of the city. Like Marvin Gaye's *What's Goin' On*, Norman Winfield's early 70s productions for The Temptations and Undisputed Truth or, inevitably, Sly & The Family Stone's *There's A Riot Goin' On*, it foresees and procreates like steam from a pressure cooker. It might be low-end-parades, not riots, filling Berlin's streets these days, but Lidell's music: the voice, projecting into the world, is a shield against hostilities.

"I hate cities," he says. "They just eat you up, they're this invisible thing. It's obvious that institutions are chewing you up and spitting you out.... I'm a country boy, grew up in a small village, even, it's still hard for me to feel at home in a bustling metropolis. I feel awkward. I'm quite a dreamer, so I haven't got the speed of sense that's required in the city. That's why I live in Berlin now, actually. Because it's really like living in a village where I live. It's got the trappings of the city but I can just rip down the road and see all my friends...."

"The City" marks the point where Lidell's attitude to songwriting changed. "That was a time when I was really unhappy in Berlin, and I was skint. I took it to the absolute limits: how crude can I be without being redundant? And that's probably the crudest on the album. But I noticed that when I started to play in Germany, it had exactly the effect I was hoping for: people were saying, I like that song, 'The City,' and people were coming back to me after the show talking about the lyrics. I never got that with Super Collider."

"Multiply," in which Lidell sings of being "caught between myself and my shadow," and choruses with "I'm so tired of repeating myself/Beating myself up/Gonna take a nap and multiply," is surely an autobiographical reference to his stylistic change of heart. "It's more like 'Tracks Of My Tears,'" he says, "put on the brave front, but actually you're having a nightmare. And as it is, I feel that a lot. I'm not as happy as I feel I ought to be in life sometimes—I feel that great things can happen.... I don't know whether it's the English cynicism that's ever present in me, but I never feel satisfied, I never feel I have the right to enjoy moments."



"Part of changing that is trying to realise that by always presenting myself and living in a world that has a certain kind of sound, it rubs off on you like a perfume in a room, it becomes your scent. If you hang out with moody bastards, you're going to become a moody bastard, you know?"

Back in the day, in the cramped Snakepit studio of Motown's Hitsville, a succession of anonymous sessionaires known as The Funk Brothers created the backing tracks for the big name singers. Lidel clearly isn't a whippersnapper like Berry Gordy, though, and his own funky fraternity is assembled from friends and ill-matched neighbours – unmotown bastards, by all accounts.

The players on *Multiply* include Dominique Sakala, aka Moko, the Canadian expat who's one of many artists currently taking advantage of Berlin's bargain-bin accommodation. Born in Saskatchewan, Moko was a member of legendary group The Shift, which also spawned Peaches (another friend of Lidel's along with idiosyncratic performers like Taylor Searcy and Kevin Blechmond); his album *In Mesopotamia* was reportedly influenced by Desmond Morris and free jazz. *Multiply* is all over touched by the hand of Moko; he co-writes several tracks, plays synths, organ, Farfisa and Rhodes, guitar, bass and percussion. Also on board is another Canadian expat, 'Chilly' Gonzales, whose stage bedside manner and piano skills always charm audiences. Drums, when not programmed by Lidel, are played by The Neckers' Tony Buck, or Berliner Daniel Raymond Gahn, of whom Lidel says, "He's a crazy enthusiast and general nutter, and the way he plays is pretty ghetto, loose and raggedy." Most tracks were initially laid down at Lidel's place, with some post-production taking place at Studio Ferber in France, which he was pleased to discover had been used by Jane Birkin.

"No one can create that Motown sound again, but I really wanted that essence," he explains. "Keeping that Sunday afternoon spirit to the recording process, till we had something really warm sounding. We did it on a low budget, but I've learnt a lot of techniques with mics. After I'd finished the album, I heard multitrack recordings of 'Heard It Through The Grapevine', the individual parts, and 'River Deep, Mountain High', as well. A mate of mine had it from some unknown source – it's one of those Internet mysteries. It is amazing to hear. A lot of that early Motown stuff is not tight – it's pretty to the point, pinning the beat. I thought, you know what, we didn't do too bad, because our raw tracks sounded pretty close to this.

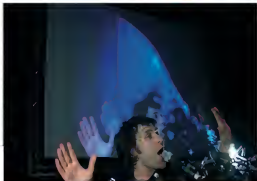
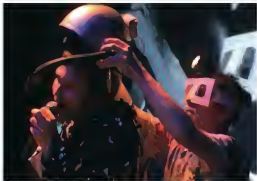
"It's to do with the spill," he goes on, "the fact that each mo picks up everything. That's how they did it, too. Every rhythm part in Motown seems to have been recorded at the same moment, so you don't record drums separately to a click without the guitar and bass. The rhythmic part is linked, part of a single coherent word, and that's how we did it. It gets it all together and you don't get this ice cold musical void."

Few who have seen Lidel's live show can take issue with the sheer power of his voice. Unlike other distinctive yet jet and frail voices of recent times such as Antony or Joanna Newsom, his songs are aimed firmly at the back of the hall. He's often asked how he

discovered that store of vocal riches, and he confesses he doesn't have a stock answer. "There's a lot of music in my family. It's just one of those things that gets encouraged," he offers. His mother was a professional singer with an orchestra, and he had a music teacher who wrote songbooks for children, for which Lidel was the guinea pig. "There was a lot of song in the house. It was common for me to sing and not feel weird about it. I noticed that a lot of my friends were really shy about singing. My voice broke and I thought, wow, I won't sing again. And I got really into electronic music, and caned loads of drugs, and probably couldn't have sung even if I'd wanted to. But the bottom line is, I do really feel it and I love it too, so after a while I started to think, I can't be bothered to feel bad about it, I just want to love what I feel, and that's still really hard to do." But his desire to use that voice has been with him from the days when he was visiting careers advisors: "There was a day at school when I was like, 'I really want to do a music career.' I remember the day when I just thought to myself, 'Why do I feel weird when I say that?' It's weird the way things turn out. It could have all turned out so differently. I had crazy lucky breaks."

Lidel's wanderings began when he left the family home and began a degree in physics at Bristol University. This was interrupted for six months due to illness, and when he returned he changed to philosophy, partly because it involved less punishing work hours. In London in the mid-90s he was playing in a Techno outfit called Subhead and hanging at clubs including Growth, an underground night in Shoreditch in the city's East End. "Amazing, the best Techno parties that I ever went to – I was lucky to be a part of that, actually, looking back at it now. Back in 94, 95, when that scene was really exciting, a growth time. I really felt part of a scene for the first time, and feeling like I wanted to contribute to the space race, in a way." But it was in Brighton, the relaxed seaside city on England's South Coast, where he fell in with the crowd that set him on his current path. At Growth he heard British underground electronic records like "Defunkt" by a young producer called Cristian Vogel. "I thought, out of all the people that are doing this, this guy is by far the best. This stuff is really amazing, how the hell does he do this? I was determined to meet him, so I went to Brighton with the express purpose of meeting him, and luckily enough, I met him on the first day that I arrived, at Brighton Festival. I saw a Tresor bag on the ground, and I asked the owner of the bag whether she was Cristian's sister, and she told me no, but she's Cristian's girlfriend. And she was like, who are you? I said, well I've been making these records in London, with Subhead, and she was like, 'Oh no, I can't believe it – Cristian's just been playing your record at Love Parade and it was an amazing moment, the highlight of his show.' So my timing was perfect. And then we met each other and got on really well, started to think about getting the studio together pretty soon afterwards. It's one of those super feel coincidences. He taught me so much. I'm really indebted to him. He's an awesome dude."

Born to Chilean parents, Vogel had arrived in Brighton in 1992 to study music at Sussex University and been seduced by the club scene and hedonistic atmosphere of the city's nightlife. By the time he met



PHOTOS: EVA STRIMMER/KEI, OUSAKI/LO, JUAN DÍAZ, BOHANN, PABLO PASCOO, KOTTER/US

Clockwise from top right: Lidell dons one of his "media costumes", replicated on screen, suited at Sonar Festival, Barcelona, 2003; on stage solo and jamming with Squarpusher at Warp's festival at the Vassarel Museum, Aix En Provence, 2005; breaking a sweat with video artist Pablo Pascoo

Lidell, he was well established in UK and European Techno as a solo artist and as owner of the Mosaicq label. In 1996 he set up No Future (also known as Entufon), a label and management collective that exists in this day providing a production base for artists like Neil Landstrumm, Justin Berkov, Si Begg, Metecotes and others. At this point Techno was on the rise in Germany, Austria, France, almost everywhere on the European mainland, but relatively marginalised in the UK, where European electronics found very few homes in clubs, giving way to big name American and British DJs and lacking focal events on the scale of Berlin's Love Parade or Barcelona's Sonar.

No Future were proudly marginal and Brighton's underground music scene at that point was off the London media radar; but it had its share of peculiar and lively artists and spaces. At a club night called Monkey's Lounge, a haven for the more unconventional local musicians, performance artists, video projectors and general bores, Lidell was so transported by the antics of a group called Balzac that he jumped up on stage with them. "I was pretty young," he says, "in my early twenties, and that was back in the day when I was not afraid to get up on the mic with a band I didn't know, and start jamming. And they were really up for that. Superlatived, Zapateco-equivalent, insane song structures that were just so ambitious, and we pulled it off – it was rocking! I miss those days. I definitely learnt how to sing with those guys. Because I'd always have to be belting it out of Pk, again and again until my voice hardened up. Now, I can't sing that hard – I was better in those days, which is crazy."

Balzac featured Matt Yee-King, who went on to be one of the core individuals in a local coalition of Brighton cyberpunks, drill 'n' bassers and electronic multimedia mavericks that came to be known as Trash. Normally arranged around designer Matt Consume & Lynton Milton, the collective also included artists on the Brighton Symymania label, which originally distributed Squarepusher, as well as the No Future stable.

It was among these people that Lidell encountered Geoff Johnston, aka Pablo Fiasco, who regularly accompanies Lidell's current live shows with his frenetic mixture of blowup Super-8 footage (Johnston occasionally roaming the stage carrying the projector) and in your face realtime DV cam feeds. A notorious graffiti stencil and graffiti artist, Johnston, a Canadian who came to the UK aged 17, has connections with the New York Subculture Elite crew, and studied film in California with Chip Lord of legendary 1970s agit-video artists Art Film. He is responsible for the artwork on both Lidell's album covers and also designs and makes his own 'media costumes' 'out of video tape and film', Johnston outlines. "We're going to have some newspaper costumes, light costumes. Once I got more cameras I'd like to have live tracking of what's going on – cameras attached to his body." Johnston vividly recalls the first time he saw Lidell on stage during a Brighton Trash event. "When he started singing it was this powerhouse force, and it blew me away. I started filming him on his face, holding this projector up and stuttering the film so that it burned and exploded and bubbled on his face. Immediately I was inspired to do something I hadn't done before." Occasionally Pablo Fiasco becomes a wordless, Chaplinesque character as a foil to Lidell's

music, improvising new projection screens with bedsheet, hammer and nails, barking commands to his band to carry out the work. Lidell also plays in a so far undocumented trio called Thang. "It's a cinema Country & Western band," explains Johnston. "We show my films and we make a live spoof Country & Western soundtrack while I tell stories about the films that are going on."

In 1997 several Lidell tracks appeared on a Mite Plateaux compilation called *Industrial+sample+groucho beat*, a title that's never been bettered as a nutshell of Trash's aesthetics – heavy and barbed electronic waste product. Lidell's contributions are belching noise Techno, but one unnamed and uncredited track at the end, possibly by Lidell, is a musique concrete type piece (he's a big fan of Tod Dockstader) containing gospel and bebop samples. Another track, "Riddim", features the kind of amateur beatboxing he still does today, although he declines to call what he does beatboxing in the true sense. "I really need it as a way to get up and get going, but I don't learn routines."

1998 was spent sharing a studio with Vogel and almost inevitably they fell to working together. Lidell on vocals, Vogel moving into a funkier cut-up production technique. They formalised the partnership later that year as Super\_Collider, with the European smash "Darn (Cold Way D'Love)" and the album *Head On* (which No Future licensed to Loaded Records, a subsidiary of the well-connected Big Beat label Skint, home to Fatboy Slim and others).

"I'll offer you my touch for this sound"  
Super\_Collider, "Close To A Change"

In Super\_Collider's two albums to date can be heard the real roots of Lidell's current soul stance, yet they are almost entirely digital constructions – Lidell calls them "melodious soundwaves" – many of the song structures arrived at by endless and painstaking software tweaks and hard disk editing. *Head On*'s sleeve is a conflation of Vogel's and Lidell's heads, pasted into a composite from scores of digital flakes of their two portraits. In part, Lidell is currently in reaction against this and approach. "It was really great and I loved doing it," he affirms, "but it was really hard to find the right moment to know where that music sort of is in a life... We were taking adventures but we didn't really, ourselves. I don't think, know what it was for, or how we even felt about the tracks. It's bizarre."

Their live shows, with an augmented group including syndrome, bass and Fiasco's projections, could be among the most wayward and extreme of that generation of electronics. At Rome's Dissonance Festival in Rome in 2002, Lidell staggered around the open air stage apparently off his nuts (he tells me now he doesn't get stoned to go on stage), screaming, leering direct to the video feed, rhythm section pumping the backbeat like Prince's Revolution group. Vogel generated almighty hums and gauged distorted basslines, as Lidell stepped into a succession of increasingly elaborate and ghoulish costumes. At one point Fiasco stretched a white sheet over him, nailing its corners to the floor, stuck a pair of shades over Lidell's head, and he proceeded to sing while Fiasco projected a series of dystopian cytypes onto the ghostly form. It ended in collapse, Lidell

eventually falling over somewhere behind Vogel's kit. "We had a lot of fun," comments Lidell now. "Back in the day, it was really liberating for me and Cristian to get back out on the road with more musicians, after being cooped up in the studio writing that stuff. Going out and playing it live was just like crazy release."

Although the group has been on a back burner since 2002's *Raw Digits*, Lidell tells me they convened a "partially successful" live session last September, as a full group, attempting to bash out an album's worth of material inside a month. The project remains half finished and there's no release scheduled so far.

It's possible that studying philosophy has rubbed off on his lyric writing, which has reached a new transcendence. "I didn't want the lyrics to suffer the Super\_Collider effect of too many metaphors," he says. "I didn't want them to be endlessly hiding their true colours. Don't get me wrong, sometimes it's good to hint at something rather than being blatant about it. But with this album I thought, 'You've just got to say what you think, and don't worry about hiding any more'." It was nothing that audiences in Europe weren't understanding me at all, and I thought that's a shame, so I want to make these lyrics clearer, get to the essence of a meaning – just lay it bare.

"We had a lot of problems with this album, with drum tracks and so on, where the feel was good but obviously the timing's off, and you spend so much time nudging these little Lego bricks around on screen. Me and Mucky would always look at each other and sort of sing this song, like, 'Is this music?' Is this what music is now? Because sometimes it gets so bizarre, you're just looking at this arrangement on screen... You're going a bit delirious, it's just these little blocks that are meant to be your music. And you can of course infinitely shunt them around, and that's 'the nudge', but you're stuck in this little world of 'to nudge or not to nudge?', you know? Super\_Collider was all nudge, for example. Very like musique concrete in the way it was played – scripted. Whereas you're playing with Mucky and the musicians, I was just like, 'Man, the whole reason we're rocking so hard is that we're playing this stuff. So let's play it. Why do we have to cut it up?'"

So Multiply is Lidell's trade-off between the scrapple and the scalpel. He may look like he owns it, but push him on what's going through his head while it's all going off on stage and the answer's not what you'd expect. "I feel like an amateur every time I go up on stage," he fesses. "I feel that it's my first time... I'm starting a track again from a blank sheet, and I'm like, 'What is music?' If people know the kind of things that go through my head... I'm surprised that I can instil that kind of confidence in people."

But then comes the time he longs for every night, the time when his mind can take flight. "The only moments when I feel like I'm doing anything really valuable is when I'm not thinking. 'What am I gonna do next?' And time passes and it's just like a ramp that just happens magically, and each layer heaves each other layer up, and each other layer goes like this – he mimes rolling up a mountain – "I've got another foothold to go to here, I can do it like this, and then we're rolling again, and then we'll just drop a verse, and off you go." □  
Multiply is out now on Warp





# The Primer: Lone Horns

A bi-monthly guide to the core recordings of a particular artist or genre. This month: Brian Morton gets intimate with jazz and improv at their most existential in his survey of soliloquies for solo horns and woodwinds. Illustration: Savage Pencil

**Solo playing** routinely interrogates virtually every casual assumption we have about music and its function. It is also the most demanding discipline in improvised music. None of the comforting clichés apply: no “dialogue”, no “sparring” or contention with a partner, no call and response. Pianists, guitarists and to a certain degree double bass players and drummers (who have proved to be enthusiastic solo improvisers) have the wherewithal to accompany themselves harmonically and/or rhythmically, and to play countermelodies or contrasting lines. But what of solo wind players who by virtue of instrumental design are only able to play one sound at a time, with no chords and no rhythmic accompaniment? What special challenges do they face? Their limitations can be overcome to some degree by overdubbing, extended technique – multiphonics, vocalising through the horn – or by imaginative use of natural acoustics, playing in resonant environments.

There are a few unaccompanied saxophone, trumpet and trombone pieces in the classical canon, though usually a piano or organ is on hand. In the improvising tradition, it’s supposed to have begun with Coleman Hawkins’s “Picasso” in 1937, Afro-cubist rather than Afro-Cuban, a freeform solo sketch governed by the same ironical logic he brought to the classic group performance of “Body And Soul”. Anthony Braxton is credited with establishing solo saxophone recording with his *For Alto* in 1968, and it is the woodwinds which inevitably dominate unaccompanied playing, less physically demanding than the brass instruments, more susceptible to sustained pedal notes. Eric Dolphy’s solitary “God Bless The Child”, played on bass clarinet, became a feature of his live sets toward the end of his life, pragmatically a relief from the atrophied stiffness of having to play with worthy but slow European rhythm sections but also driven by a deep inner need to make the horn as self-sufficient as the piano.

Sometimes solo playing is mere display, sometimes a kind of cleansing exercise designed to rid the music of dependency on rhythmic or harmonic supports. Alternatively, it answers needs locked away in a conception of music too pure and individual to be exposed to interplay with others or with material familiar enough to allow the listener to surf on the lacunae.

There are temptations, of course: overdubbing is the most obvious, as a range of players, from Vinny Golia, Kalaparush Maurice McIntyre to even the mighty Evan Parker, have shown. Sometimes it’s been enough to record in an acoustic so resonant that it creates the illusion of other simultaneous voices. The real challenge, though, is the ability of a single, monophonic instrument, reed, bell, lips, lungs, plunger, slide and heart to create a small musical universe in the instant. The lone horns issue urgent clarions...

## Soprano saxophone

**EVAN PARKER  
SAXOPHONE SOLOS**  
CHRONOSCOPE CD 1679  
**MONOCEROS**  
CHRONOSCOPE CD 1678

**THE SNAKE DECIDES**  
PSI CD 1686

The topography of the lungs, saxophone playing as utopias, the higher mathematics of harmony – however you choose to regard Evan Parker’s soprano saxophone solos, as exercises in sheer physical control, whether as admirations of new and ideal musical spaces, or as challenging exercises in the verbal organisation of music, there is nothing else like them in the canon. The old joke – “I see Evan has a new record out.” “Oh, is he still playing the same solo?” – has a certain validity behind the sweetness because, before he put down his soprano and solitary ways for a time in the 1990s, it did seem as if these solo performances, stretching back to the beginning of the 1970s, were part of a great continuum of enquiry. The only valid parallel, spiritual if not strictly musical, was the final few years of John Coltrane’s life, except that Parker’s solo excursions were less like deep space missions and more like inner space experiments, molecular bombardments and sub-nuclear interventions. Parker’s role in key British Improv texts, like *Spontaneous Music Ensemble’s* *Kyōtoin*, was vital, along with Derek Bailey, Paul Rutherford and SMC’s Trevor Watts and John Stevens, he helped to articulate a language

of free enquiry that was particularly suitable for solo exploration. Like much of that generation and probably more than most, Parker began in post-Coltrane jazz and evolved – rapidly – into a free player. Evolution it was, rather than the sudden change of direction sometimes suggested. Saxophone Solos still hints at a jazz sensibility, with an implicit pulse, a subliminal theme and variations structure, and an emotional drama that is stripped out of the later records. By the end of the process, Parker is not working linearly at all, but almost as if from within some pre-existent musical space that does not in itself change (hence the crack about the “same solo”) but which consistently reveals new harmonic and rhythmic aspects (which is why the joke is neither accurate nor fair). The *Snake Decides* is one of the great instrumental statements in any form, magnificently recorded by the late Michael Gezon to tease out every inflection of the music, every accidental and overtone up to the 32nd harmonic. Parker worked a long time in this vein, as 1978’s *Time Monoceros* bears witness, but this was and is his masterpiece, simple in conception, endlessly sophisticated in delivery.

**STEVE LACY  
AXIEME**  
RED CD 1915  
**HOOKY**  
EXAMEN CD 1026  
**STRAWNS**  
CHAMPS CD 1977  
**CLINKERS**  
HARDY CD 1977

Parker’s only rival as a solo soprano player was a man who started in Dixieland and worked his way toward a new kind of jazz composition: wry, allusive, collageist. The mid-70s chronological compression here is no accident. These were the years when Steve Lacy was known largely for his on-the-spot inventions with the small, straight horn; there are other discs out there, like 1976’s *Snap* or *Jazz Magnet*, or *Actuality* or *Solo: Live At Unity Temple* from the later 50s (on Cavity Search and Wobblly Real respectively). Lacy began his career as a Dixielander, which probably gave him the confidence to take his straight



**MICHEL DONEDA**  
ANATOMIE DES CLEFS  
(807) 470-0100, 1008

**Alto saxophone**

**Tenor saxophone**

However, the more complex the network, the more difficult it is to understand and manage. This is why it is important to have a clear understanding of the network structure and the roles of the different components.



Grant Parker



Anthony Braxton



Michel Denode



Steve Lacy



Kazuo Abe



Elroy Zakaria

## The Primer

### CHARLES GAYLE

UNTO I AM

WECO CD 1994

### SOLO IN JAPAN

HRP CD 1997

Gayle's background as a street musician means that solo performance is second nature to him. His stark, biblical approach is as arresting on record as it must have been on a Manhattan street corner or in a club. If few of the group records match up to the sheer majesty of *Touche* on *Trane* (his FMP trio with William Parker and Rashied Ali), the solo discs do not disappoint in any respect. *Unto I Am* has him dabbling on piano, drum kit and bass clarinet, but it's the smelted hardness of the two tenor solos that compels, performances whose starkness and simplicity of structure suggest they must have some predetermined logic middle even to an attentive listener. If this is abandonment, it is abandonment with discipline. He always seems to know where to go, even when he is heading in the upper register, barely in control of his horn. Solo in Japan is stunning, despite some dispensable piano and soprano saxophone. Gayle's music is almost physically present, as if by the sheer monumentalism of his creative philosophy (it makes little sense to talk about "technique"), he is able to defy the saxophone somewhere in the air between himself and the listener. Typically close mixing and intense dynamics have something to do with it, but so has the soothing power of the performance.

### EVAN PARKER

CHICAGO SOLO

ORCADESK CD 1996

Remarkably, after eight discs of solo soprano, this was the first time Parker had committed himself to a full programme of tenor playing. As with Braxton's *For Alto*, most of the pieces are intended as dedications to musicians with whom Parker has worked over the years. That, plus a shift of tonality which might wrongfoot a generation of listeners who have convinced themselves that Evan is only a soprano specialist, gives this fine record a weighty, almost declaratory quality, as if the soloist were outgrowing fellow improvisers Lee Konitz, Chris McGregor, George Lewis and Braxton. The weight and purposefulness of his tenor work takes it in different directions from the harmonically laden soprano solos, but the essential syntax is intact and unmistakable.

### FRANK LOWE

DON'T PUNK OUT

EMILIAN CD 1977

Frank Lowe came out of Memphis with the same big, abrasive tone as fellow Tennessee George Coleman. His avant-garde credentials are complex, his playing a mixture of the fierce, exploratory Free Music that came out of late Coltrane, Albert Ayler and Pharoah Sanders, and the sound of much earlier swing saxophonists like Herschel Evans and Chu Berry. Playing solo, Lowe always sounds rooted and centred, even when his tonality ranges to extremes. There's an elaborate backstory to *Don't Punk Out*, mainly a set of duets with Eugene Chadbourne modelled on Anthony Braxton & Derek Bailey's *First Duo Concert* (Emilian 1974). At the original 1977 sessions, Lowe wanted to use the occasion to acknowledge two major influences – Albert

Ayer ("Ghosts" and Sonny Rollins "Fire Down There"). Later, in 1979, Dr C ran down some Low compositions on a busted guitar. Finally, for the reissue in 2000, the saxophonist added three unaccompanied improvisations, which are among the most extraordinary recordings in his whole canon. Impassioned and sonically dense, these are nonetheless unexpectedly traditional sounds from a prematurely lost master – Lowe succumbed to lung cancer in 2003.

## Baritone saxophone

### HAMMET BLUIETT

BIRTHRIGHT

PIROH PAKISTAN LP 1977

The Illinois-born anchorman from The World Saxophone Quartet, who pioneered an eclectic avant-garde idiom for that rather tired format, is often said to specialise in the upper range of his horn, playing baritone at times as if it were a thickly limbed tenor or even (in the same key) alto. Here, at the Kitchen and on his own, he explores the lower frequencies. Recorded without overdubs, pedals or post-production sweetening, but with multiple microphones to create a sense of movement and of spatial relationships, the performance sounds almost like some unaccompanied blues singer douring at ancient longings and loyalties. "In Tribute To Harry Carney" nods to the pioneer of the baritone horn. Carney senior is invoked on "My Father's House", while the saxophonist's wife Eva (who gave her name to a later Soul Note album) is the dedicatee of a short and heartfelt song that sums up much of his musical thinking but also demonstrates how much emotion can be communicated in a single blown – sometimes overblown – line.

### MATS GUSTAFSSON

IMPROPOSITIONS

PHONO SWEDISH CD 1996

The Swedish founder of Gush and The Thing, and regular collaborator with Barry Guy and Ken Vandermark, plays pretty much the entire saxophone range all the way up to soprano, but the emphasis in this solo record falls largely on baritone, often with a crumpled beer can in the bell, as on "Just A Slice Of Acoustic Car". Elsewhere he modifies his tenor sound by muffling the horn with the knee of his jeans and, on "Beethovenist Hu'o", introduces his fluteophone, a surreal object consisting of a concert flute played through a sax mouthpiece and with a damper strap stuck up the other end. Whatever the exact sonority, though, Gustafsson brings a fiery intensity to saxophone and a voice often misleadingly likened – because of the baritone – to Serge Chouffry, Lars Gullin or even John Surman, but closer in spirit to the Chicago improvisers with whom he became fruitfully involved in the 90s.

## Clarinet

### MICHEL PORTAL

DEJAREME SOLO!

DISCLOSURE CD 1979

The Frenchman properly belongs with the multi-instrumentalists below, but the clarinets have always

been his first and most lasting commitment, and here his saxophone playing is far less immediate and visceral than the essays on pretty much the whole clarinet family. A favourite of composers Pierre Boulez and Luciano Berio, Portal has the classically trained player's ability to articulate even a sour, microtonal sound with exactness. Even where the logic of an improvised line isn't obvious, he invests it with a sense of purpose that leaves you listening up for the informing tonality or the structuring tone row that might unlock the enigma.

## Various reeds and woodwinds

### NED ROTHENBERG

TRIALS OF THE ARGO

LUMINA LP 1991

A charter member (with Herb Robertson and Robert Dick) of The New Winds Ensemble, Rothenberg regards solo improvisation less as an existential challenge than as his "home base", the "crux" – to borrow the title of a later and better known solo project released on Leo – at which he can speak intimately and reassess both technique and philosophy. He plays an impressive range of horns and has pioneered jazz-based improv on the shakuhachi, an instrument on which linear development is rather difficult. It's at the heart of these two long pieces, the title track and the desolately beautiful "Coronatus After The Inuit", in which the languages of solo horn playing are as deliciously mysterious as an Eskimo love song, outwardly cold but stoked with beauty.

### PETER BRÖTZMANN

SOLO

FMP LP 1976

14 LOVE POEMS

FMP LP 1984

NO NOTHING

FMP CD 1993

NOTHING TO SAY

FMP CD 1994

Brötzmann had very shrewdly set out his multi-instrumental stall on previous solo outings, which seemed determined to confound his reputation as an overdriven Teutonic tenor screamer. But there is more to the Brötzmann story than the dense ensemble music found on his classic *Machine Gun* (which was to European improvisation what Coltrane's *Ascension* was to the New Thing in America). The real character of the man is to be found in his drawings and in his unaccompanied work. The first 30 seconds of 1976's *Solo* was exactly in character, a klaxon warning rather than a fanfare. What followed must have surprised – perhaps even disappointed – more than a few of those who thought they were throwing in their lot with an extreme noise terrorist. More often than not, and most obviously on 14 Love Poems (for equal surprise value, imagine an early Keith Jarrett album called *Screaming Metal Death*), his solo work involves consideration and tenderness as much as raw power. His clarinet playing remains seriously underrated, captured with blunt fidelity by Jos Gebers on all these four releases. There's a lot of the blues in Brötzmann's



Charles Gayle



Frank Lowe



Mats Gustafsson



Peter Brotzmann

## The Primer

only playing, albeit of a fairly nihilistic sort. By no means nothing seemed to be less easy, or perhaps just less passion with which to say it, but there is a quirky Beckettian emptiness about it which borders on gentle humour. Nothing To Say was dedicated to Oscar Wilde, but whether Wilde the libertarian rebel, wide the aesthete or Wilde the aphorist isn't always clear. It's back to the bass saxophone for the title track, which might well imply an attempt to capture Oscar's weighty physical grace in musical form. It's also that delivers most of the biting lines, though by stage Brötzmann had found a way of making the Hungarian single reed turgid sound hard and industrial, and not at all like the Ötökör fellow it is

**ROSCOE MITCHELL**  
DUETS AND SOLOS  
BLACK SAINT 1990

## SOUND SONGS

06LMARK CD 1994-97

## SOLO 3

MAY/June 2004

One of the

genus of *Bosque*

himself away. The Art Ensemble of Chicago go quite so long, Mitchell is one of the few multi-instrumentalists capable of sustaining interest entirely on his own and on a range of saxophones from soprano to bass. He takes an almost orchestral approach to solo saxophone playing, and he's got a great sense of humor, thinking with sly, percussive passages and short lines of lyrical simplicity, if you ever have the patience, play a couple of Mitchell solos simultaneously and see how logically they fit together. The solo pieces on *Duets And Solos*, which is shared with another great Chicagoan from the AACM academy, Muhal Richard Abrams, are something of a disappointment, only because the duo is so good, and the music is so lacustrine. Sound Songs includes "Full Frontal Saxophone", surely one of the definitive lone horn performances, while the recent *Solo 3* triple set distills the mix a bit with touches of overblowing and a visit to Roscoe's percussion cake, a hangover from The AACM's "little instruments" days. There's a couple of tracks here later cuts that contrast nicely with the few and transitive of his younger work. One of the very greats.

**JOHN BUTCHER**

### THIRTEEN FRIENDLY NUMBERS

UNSOLOS CO 1461

## LONDON AND COLOGNE

RABSTEAD CAN CO 1996

Butcher is a second generation British free improviser, an alumnus of the latterday Spontaneous Music Ensemble and a formidable technician on a range of horns. Recent site-specific performances released on his own Weight Of Wax label reflect Butcher's interest in the processing of saxophone sounds, something he had done electronically on 2002's *Invisible Ear* (Fringes). There is an element of processing on the earlier *Thirteen Friendly Numbers*, but for the most part what you hear is Butcher expending the vocabulary of soprano and tenor playing

(plus a bit of pantone) in a way that sets him quite apart from the more jazz-influenced idiom pioneered by Evan Parker. The overbubbled stuff – particularly “Bells and Clappers” – is no less virtuosic in conception, but it’s Butcher’s intense and minute application to the production of sound that makes the album, and its live sequel *London And Cologne*, so compelling.

## Trumpet

**BILL DIXON**  
SOLO WORKS (ODYSSEY)

ARCHIVE/EDITION 0600 1970-93

A lifelong educator and organiser, Dixon has a key place in the evolution of free music in America as curator in 1964 of the October Revolution in Jazz, which is black music's equivalent of the Army Show. Dixon has also been an influential teacher, basing himself at Bennington College in Vermont in much the same way that Braxton has made Wesleyan University in Connecticut his headquarters. Though disturbingly little known to a broad jazz audience, Dixon has been a tireless experimenter, whose body of composition is as egregiously overlooked as his smaller body of solo work. These are mostly sketches and drafts towards larger work, but they are also entire of themselves, and not just rehearsal work. A requiem for the prematurely lost Booker Little is a high point of *Odyssey*, a six-volume set prepared by the trumpeter himself with examples of his own artwork, while 'Umbra E Luce - For Sid Makay' keeps up the intensely personal tone. Dixon has a mellow and mournful trumpet voice, with something of the cornet's fat ring and the flugelhorn's roundness. As a solo instrument it is gorgeous and compelling, able to express itself as readily as it can slide into an easy, blues-laden style that always sounds deceptively familiar. Dixon helped to run Sables Records for a while, but has since been poorly served by the business, relying mostly on European labels (Soul Note, FMP, Between The Lines) to issue his work. Where artists like Wadada Leo Smith have enjoyed the occasional patronage of ECM and Trapp, Dixon has had to follow his own self-started path.

## Trombone

**PAUL RUTHERFORD**  
THE GENTLE HARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE

EMANEM CO 1074

**TROMBOLENIUM**

EMANEM CO 1986-88

Along with Derek Bailey, Evan Parker, John Stevens and Tony Oxley, Paul Rutherford is the man who helped set British free jazz/improv on its unique course. Rutherford's genius is his alertness to context, whether it's the mood of an audience or the exact acoustic ambience of a room, his place on the bill or the state of his slide and tubes. Everything – whether a woody echo from a church wall or a dribble of spit inside the trombone – becomes part of the language of the performance. These are both magnificent records.

wryly subversive on *The Gentle Harm Of The Bourgeoisie*, more authoritative on *Trambolenum*, but in both cases music that moves beyond instrumentality into something profound and very moving. Without a definite pulse, Rutherford creates his own timeframes. Without anything resembling a blues structure, he always manages to create shapes that have the emotional impact of a blues and the form's cathartic impact. Microphone knocks, breaths, murmurs: all are part of the fabric, as integral to the finished canvas as Jackson Pollock's thumbprints, faceburts and lost keys.

**GEORGE LEWIS**  
THE SOLO TROMBONE RECORD  
SACRED MUSIC 1939

A solo performance by Lewis was something to see as well as listen to. Often he had the horn completely dismantled before he was five minutes in, blowing rude, untuned sounds across one of the constituent tubes. One of the pioneers of real-time computer electronics in improvisation, he's often overlooked these days as a brass improviser. The Solo Trombone Band was his first real group, in 1964, with a percussionist. Like Strayhorn, Lewis was an ASCM member who rejected the more extreme wing of the scorned earth rejection of standards and changed base jazz — he was also conventionally trained at Yale — which is why the set ends with a defiantly romantic and appropriately Brittenesque reading of "Lush Life". It begins with the mid-century "Toujours (Prelude for Trombone)" simultaneously with "Lush Life", and it comes in between that makes the record fascinating. "Phenomenology" and "Untitled Dead Sequence" highlight Lewis's extraordinarily unfussy technique, his ability to make sounds snap and smart, and the use of mutes and other modifications to broaden his palette without ever losing the brassy sting that makes his music so much fun. Lewis's music has had traded in for a more saxophone based articulation. Belatedly resumed, this is a minor classic.

**ALBERT MANGELSDORFF**  
TROMBONELINESS

SACKVILLE LP 1678

PURITY

MCOO CQ 1295

Or, you're new alone with a multiphonic. He'd be better known if he played saxophone, but Mangelsdorff is one of the giants of European free music. Along with his saxophonist brother Erni, Albert was part of the underground jazz scene in Frankfurt during the Second World War. His approach to playing ever since has been defiantly individual, flexible as to context, and unpretentious. His ability to control spirit notes, generate chords and vary his approach to combine a hard, brassy attack with an almost saxophone-like articulation, often within a single measure, were ironically fueled by an early schooling on violin and guitar. He's a virtuoso, but he's also content to explore his instrument at leisure, coaxing harmonics as brittle as icicles and rich, legato lines that continually hint at changes based jazz. "Creole Love Call" even makes an appearance on Tromboneopolis. ☐





Roscoe Mitchell



John Butcher



Bill Dixon



George Lewis



Paul Retherford



Albert Mangelsdorff

# Charts

Playlists from the outer limits

## 15 Dodgy Group Names

**Avex Presley**  
The Venus Flytraps  
The Pro-Midget Mafia  
The Lawe It To Brewer Corehead Innovation  
Usher Dickinson's Shameless Quirkies  
The Great Kinky Go  
Jinkov's Winesap  
Barthens' Bush  
HIV And The Positives  
The Telegraphic Bandits Of Doom  
Leuresthean Catapult  
Suffering Becard  
Smashed Pomar Dance Party  
Pissed Jears  
To Live And Shove In LA

All generic group names. Compiled by The Trowler

We welcome charts from record shops, radio shows, clubs, DJs, labels, musicians, readers, etc. Email [charts@thetrower.co.uk](mailto:charts@thetrower.co.uk)  
Double-slash: James Larkin's specialities

## Anthem 15

**Velvet Caress**  
Carnation (FAP)  
**Danger**  
To Del Lunt (Subliminal Sounds)  
**Covers**  
First Utterance (Moto)  
**Black Busted Angel**  
Supernature 120 Back Spin  
**Jesse**  
Rutants Against The Ocean (Wish Of Mercy)  
**Dino Lloyd**  
Drivager (And/Or/Music)  
**Animal Collective/Vastal Bumpas**  
Pumpkin Hammer EP (Fat Cat)  
**Lucy Pearson**  
Pierogie Rites (NA/ORM)  
**Seismic**  
Solera (Guns Leg)  
**Purpura**  
Heminger Of Spring 8" (Lowell Artific)  
**Hexahedron**  
In Search Of Space (EM)  
**BJ Wilson**  
Tuff To White (Ouch)  
**Hesse Hultberg**  
Cool Kasher (Lori)  
**Wile Jang-Nyan & The Nine**  
It's A Lie (World Psychedelica)  
**Gutierrez World**  
Denise (Hep)

Compiled by Zachary Rene. Anthem Records  
Portland, Oregon. [www.anthemrecords.com](http://www.anthemrecords.com)

## An Taobh Tuathail 15

**Wilek**  
Winn Lacharrie (PAA)  
**Jason Kuhnle**  
Tale (Kompakt)  
**Perorgin & Mad Mike**  
Windykew Underground Resistance  
**African Roots Act 1**  
Addis Ababa Dub (Wicked)  
**Proven**  
Float (New Ours)  
**Brittina Margensheim & Robert Lippok**  
Seamen (Musik)  
**Hellson**  
Lethal Dancer (Euros)  
**MP Stone**  
Happy (Special Materials)  
**Cristi 141**  
Cristi M4 (Unreleased/Rare)  
**P. Dury & DJ Pash**  
War Dub (Touched)  
**Dark Comedy**  
Make It (Pleased)  
**Pardox**  
Somewhere (Bassbin)  
**Arthur Russell**  
Soon To Be Innocent Fuel/Let's See (Rough Trade)  
**Pearl Tet**  
Sink Around The Face (Damned)  
**Variation Beams**  
Moonlight (Unltd)

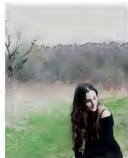
Compiled by An Taobh Tuathail, Cash, Co Galway  
92-94 FM Island. [www.too.ie](http://www.too.ie)

## The Office Ambience

**Matthew Herbert**  
Red Do Your Accidents!  
**O**  
Kontamination (Shtick)  
**Mark Stewart & The Maffia**  
Kiss The Future (Cool Jazz)  
**Kraftwerk**  
Minimum Maximum (EM)  
**CSI**  
And The Ambulance Died In His Arms  
(Threshold Housed)  
**Pinks Opium**  
One Foot Moving (Black)  
**BBC Radiohead: Workshop**  
Dad's Who Met 1 (Jony Ave Of Mum)  
**Soft Machine & Heavy Friends**  
BBC In Concert 1991 (Hax)  
**Vallens**  
Jer A Potted Egg Compilation (Potted Egg)  
**Venise & Burns**  
The Tunes The Old One Died Of (Bagram)  
**Andrey Kikhtenko**  
Two Delusion (Spook)  
**Super Minot**  
Sugar Minot At Studio One (Bout Jazz)  
**Kare Takahashi**  
Damon To Samba (Shed)  
**Vallens**  
Tutti Samba Express Vol Two (Musi)  
**Mercure Nader**  
The Sage Of Mayflower May (Scotop)

Compiled by The White Beard System

# Reviews



Marissa Nadler reviewed in Soundcheck

## Soundcheck A-Z

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Luigi Archetti & Bo Wiget 53  
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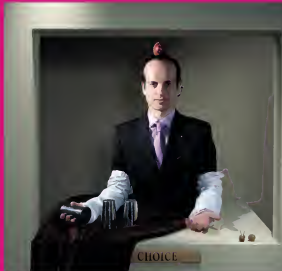
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# Soundcheck

This month's selected CDs and vinyl



Feeding frenzy: Matthew Herbert

## MATTHEW HERBERT

### PLAT DU JOUR

ACCIDENTAL CD

Shakespeare's cup about music being the food of love means that the conjoined ideas are deeply, even glibly ingrained in the mindset. But how about food as the stuff of music? There is a certain squeamishness about this idea. Food makes for too earthy subject matter. Music we regard as providing a more ethereal form of nutrition, or at the very best a post-prandial digestif. But the very process of browsing and skulking and masticating... no, take it away.

In his extensive notes and Web pages that accompany the album, Matthew Herbert makes the point about how infrequently music and food interface. *Plat Du Jour*, however, revolves exclusively around the often grubby subject of grub. It draws samples from, and is composed of, the processes whereby food is manufactured, prepared, consumed and even excreted, from abattoirs to salmon farms to a household refuse dump in Battersea. It is what it eats, so to speak. However, it's also a critique of the politics of food, either indirectly (alluding to the last meal of a condemned man on George W Bush's watch as Texas governor), or in the malign forces of globalisation which have not only resulted in the diminution of the quality of what we shovel into our mouths but also named many Third World economies for good measure. This isn't a whimsical concept album. This is hard, unpalatable stuff to swallow.

So, opener "The Truncated Life Of A Modern Industrialised Chicken" pangs and pumps into action with typically Herbert-esque elegance, its rhythmic components prim, pristine, almost comically functional

and as benign as Old MacDonald. However, the field recordings which make up its chopped and diced contents consist not merely of clucking and whistled eggs but the machinations of hatchery and slaughter on a massive scale.

More politically pointed is "An Empire Of Coffee". Again, it chugs and chimes with almost HM Bataimaisque elaborateness. As a purely musical experience, incidentally, *Plat Du Jour* often feels like a bold, homemade attempt to reinvent from scratch the very structures and internal relationships of modern music, create a new, multi-dimensional template for contemporary, computer-generated rhythm. But the real business is in the accompanying Website, [www.platdujour.co.uk](http://www.platdujour.co.uk), which reprints a chapter from Antony Gold's book *Black Gold: A Dark History Of Coffee*. This relates how the Americans, having used Agent Orange to defoliate vast swathes of Vietnam, with an untold, deleterious after-effect on its coffee crops, later undertook to "refolate" the country via the World Bank with cheap, low quality Robusta coffee bushes. This meant not only a flood of inferior coffee beans on the market but a disastrous drop in prices which affected smallholders worldwide.

"Celebrity", featuring Dani Sclisano on vocals, simulates the sugar rush of modern R&B; on albums like *Around The House*, Herbert has shown that when he wants to play it sweet and straight, he can do so better than most. However, a certain hollowiness, especially in the bleak chant, "Go Brandy/Go Beyoncé", betrays the fact that Herbert is going after the likes of Destiny's Child and other serial, money-hungry celebrity sponsors of junk food like McDonalds. Again, the Website proves its worth as a vital

**David Stubbs celebrates a concept album about the politics of food that refries the very nature of protest music**

adjunct to the album, listing the staggering and unappetising litany of ingredients (aspartame, acesulfame K, maltodextrin, emulsifier, etc) which make up the fast foodstuffs Walkers crisps and Bob The Builder pasta shapes – which in turn provide the track's sampled sonic matter.

It's not entirely without celebration. "An Apple A Day", combining the sounds of 3255 eating apples, resounds abundantly with wholesome crunchiness. It's perhaps the only track which induces feelings of peckishness. As the album progresses, it darkens, with the cacophony of mook painfulness of the earlier tracks giving way to a more acidic, pt-of-the-stomach seriousness. On "Wasteland", we are literally down in the sewer, exposed to the consequences of consumer excess which resurfaces as landfill.

The final track is a preposterously extravagant gesture of political outrage. On "Nigella, George, Tony And Me", Herbert goes to the trouble of recreating the meal Nigella Lawson made for George W Bush when he visited Tony Blair to set the seal on the decision to go to war in Iraq. He then lays it out in a field, picnic-style, and drives over it in a Christian tank. Someone had to do it, of course, but while on paper it looks like a silly stunt, the recording of the event isn't put through any sonic blender but conveyed as it happened in all its satisfying, pulsing literalness.

*Plat Du Jour*, in the end, is less about the putative relationship between music and food but between music and poetics. It suggests a possible new relationship between the two, through the twin technologies of sampling and the Internet. These are what protest songs can sound like, feel like and taste like in the 21st century. □

**ALU**  
**AUTUMENSCHEN**  
CD • CD

BY JIM HAYMES

Alongside the reissue campaign spearheaded by Vinyl-On-Demand Records (featuring De La Soul's *Debut*, Spring Aus Den Wolken, etc.), the recently released Benji Super 80 CD + DVD set of avant-garde short films and deliriously bleak musical offerings brings a swift mapping of post-punk activity in Berlin in the early 80s. Now the publication of Alu's previously unreleased album *Autumenschen* fills another blank on that map.

Emerging in 1980 as a singer and guitar duo, Alu persevered in monogamy until 1985, with several albums and a couple of cassettes making up their short discography. Yet Alu members Johannes Vester and Ludwig Papenberg's roots go back much earlier to 1970, when they were part of the hallucinatory

Krautrock trio Sand. If it weren't for Current 93's David Tibet, who recut and restored Sand's lugubrious classic LP *Down*, they and perhaps Alu would have slipped away forever: to his sleeveless Alu's *Autumenschen*, Tibet draws connections between the two groups. "In listening to the *Golden* album, I hear the beginnings of the alienated schizophrenist that comes so intensely to the fore in the material released by Alu... the hallucinations of Sand had given way to something far colder, far darker. I could say: the happiness, the beauty, has gone. What remains is the sound of those who refuse to collapse."

It's a bit of a stretch, as the two projects are almost polar opposites. "Helt Dicht Fest" from *Autumenschen* typifies the difference between the two, as none of Sand's free-floking folk atmospheres and baroque production carry over into Alu's mocha-rock production of barked vocals, detached guitar wails and a relentless march of rhythmic bass exegesis. Here, Alu exhibits the vampiric emptiness of Cabaret Voltaire. If anything, Alu represents a very rare instance of a successful reinvention from one exorbitantly estate project into another.

**BRENDON ANDEREGG**  
**FALLING AIR**  
PITCH-O-METER CD

BY MARC MASTERS

Following two albums of inventive experiments using electronics and field recordings, Brendon Anderegge shifts gears significantly on the subdued falling-Air Fast track "The Open" is

familiarly abstract, but the remaining ten tracks are structured forays into acoustic melody and folk mood. This stylistic turn is more logical than might at first appear: Anderegge's previous work had an organic warmth that translates well to these more conventional endeavors, which still feel open despite their tighter constraints.

Anderegge's guitar around his voice, a wise, curvy instrument that suggests a wealth of precedents—as the dark croak of Tom Waits, the clear hit of John Lennon, the beauty intimacy of David Kilgus—yet never settles into a single, predictable mode. The music on *Falling Air*, smartly accented with 11 instruments (including bariobans, glomspinel and heral played by nine collaborators), has a world-weary timelessness that fits such ancestry. His songs are hypnotically static; each track seems to write itself, as if Anderegge were a conduit difficultly carrying out the music's wishes.

That restrained, somber tone extends into his fascinatingly obscure lyrics, vague and fragmentary; his words are like excerpts from an incomplete conversation, flouting past tenses of indecision and impermanence. But oddly, the best track on *Falling Air* might be the vocal-less "One More Year." Rolling seamlessly through a homemade percussion loop dipped in batho fireworks, it's the most meaningful piece on an album whose parent solemnity is consistently compelling.

**LUIGI ARCHETTI & BO WIGET**  
**LOW TIDE DIGITALS II**  
RUNE SIMMONSON CD

BY JOHN GILL

This second collection of low-tide digitala from Swiss guitarist Archetti and cellist Bo Wiget, both wielding electronics, takes us even lower into the underground of drone. *Low Tide Digitala II* doesn't just hark back to the electronic works of Stockhausen and Cage, but reaches beyond to the 1910s and the Futurists, particularly the mechanical instrumentation instruments of Luigi Russolo and his fellow Futurist composers—although, as in the case of Russolo, I would say this would be Futurist verging on dada, and free of the fascist associations of mainstream Futurism. Some of this stuff you could hear by just picking up your phone up and letting the dial tone go dead.

So far, so *Fortuna* Mix, but there is more to *Low Tide Digitala* than mere historical reference. Bridging La Monte Young and Sonic Youth, and some more recent sources besides, Archetti

and Wiget's work is an almost scientific exploration of low Hertz noise, but pitched at a poetic level. Sometimes, it can even sound like Brian Eno in a particularly bad mood. But rarely does it assume the form of song.

Rarely too, however, does it resemble that ghastly North American drive-in minimalist dubbed "Dark Ambient." Archetti and Wiget are pursuing their own extremist aesthetic, which I would compare to classic AMM. Play loud. Or, then again, very quietly.

**ALBERT AYLER**  
**LIVE ON THE RIVIERA**  
ESP DISK CD

BY DAVID KEENAN

Recorded on 25 July 1970 at the Naught Foundation in France, *Live On The Riviera* presents Albert Ayler's opening night set in its entirety for the first time since the limited Italian Blu Jazz edition, complete with revised (though in some cases still dubious) track titles and brief sleeve notes from bassist Steve Tinewas. While compiling the tapes for the original Shander Ula that documented Ayler's final stand in Europe, the show's promoter Daniel Caux opted for what he considered to be the strongest performances across the two nights, focusing on the material from the second, which included pianist Cal Cobbs, and consequently less vocals from Ayler's manager/muse Maria Parks (aka Mary Marie).

And while this disc is made up of precisely the material that Caux rejected, it still makes for a historically potent listen. The absence of Cobbs means that Ayler's playing is a little less melodically anchored than on the second night, and despite one of the most oppressively inflexible rhythmic sections of his recording career—bassist Tinewas and drummer Allen Berman—there are some beautiful moments of tonal flux that succeed in transcending Maria's mundane Sunday School-style sermonizing on tracks like "Music Is The Healing Force Of The Universe."

**DEREK BAILEY/AMY DENIO/**  
**DENNIS PALMER**  
**THE GOSPEL RECORD**  
(REFERENCE EDITION)  
SHANNING RAY CD

BY JULIAN COWLEY

Singer and multi-instrumentalist Amy Denio is familiar from her performances with Tone Dogs, Pale Notes, Duxley and Fred Frith, Chris Carter and others in The Science Group. This 1999

recording from the Shaking Ray Live Society archive finds her light and appealing voice directed to traditional Southern Gospel material and sounding unsettlingly wholesome, especially when multi-touted into smirky close harmony. While Denio plays it pretty straight on songs such as "Let The Little Stranger In," Joshua Lee God's Children" and "Thy Bound For The Land Of Canaan," Dennis Palmer, half of the Chattanooga-based Lew dale, is up to mischief, supplying additional vocal harmonies and embellishments and adding wild synthesizer doodles and percussive samples.

Beyond the winsome Denio and the wily Palmer lies Derek Bailey's contribution, which weers between respectfully attentive accompaniment, quiffy Americana (and most of the time) angry ecstatic nihilism. Simultaneous snitch and mismatch seems to be the role of the genre: collusion and collusion. The *Gospel Record* is an EP; Thurston Moore had apparently wanted to release a couple of these tracks on his Gothic Peace label but was too busy. The seven tracks last only 14 minutes in total, which is probably just enough to enjoy the irony without exhausting it.

Entomancing certainly, but hardly essential listening. The edition is limited to 1000 copies. *File under* Confrontational Personality.

**DEREK BAILEY & EVAN PARKER**  
**THE LONDON CONCERT**  
PSI CD

BY RICH YOUNG

The advert on the double dealer box pictured on this CD's cover reads: "a different world". And so it was, in 1975: Improv gigs held at classical chamber venue the Wigmore Hall, a dusk-quick away from Parliament, and Derek Bailey and Evan Parker actually sharing a stage. "There was always a certain amount of tension in the relationship," notes Maria Dawkins in the booklet, but the two co-conjurors of the improvisation were in the midst of their great partnership here and this is a rare recording of them actually in musical conversation. It originally appeared as *Innus 16*, Parker, in a terse postscript, explains how when he resigned as a director of *Innus* in 1987, he took all his own tapes, retaining rights to his own recordings. There were two tapes of the directors in duo, so they kept one each. The other was the ironically titled *Conversations* (*Innus* 50, 1985), which Bailey doesn't appear to have kept in print.



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Drawing by numbers Jandek

**JANDEK**  
**GLASGOW SUNDAY**  
CORWAGOE CD

Glasgow Sunday is a major Jandek release for a host of reasons. Specifically, it's a recording of the first ever Jandek live performance, which took place unannounced on the second night of the Instal festival in Glasgow, Scotland on 17 October 2004. For the man also known as Houston resident Sterling R. Smith, it was also the first public appearance of his 26 year recording career, simultaneously quashing three decades' worth of speculation while inspiring a whole bunch more. But what makes Glasgow Sunday such an important document is less to do with how it relates to Smith's personal myths and more how it inaugurates a group that already look to be one of the most formally inventive units of the modern age. Between them, the trio of Smith on guitar and vocals, bassist Richard Youngs and drummer Alex Neilson have birthed a free music with an internal dynamic and shared musical language as singular and historically unparalleled as late 20th century behemoths like Albert Ayler's *Savoy* Unit, Keiji Haino's *Fushitsushu*, Harry Pussy and Musica Transonic. Crucially, Glasgow Sunday is a group record.

Although the actual circumstances of how the group came together are necessarily vague, it looks like Youngs and Neilson were recommended to Smith rather than requested by him. The first time they ever played together was earlier on the same day of the concert. But you'd never know it from the recordings. What this official release reinforces – even more so than on the widely circulated bootleg and on the actual night itself – is that the terms of their musical relationship were sealed the instant they started playing.

Smith's current guitar form is most immediately related to the series of recordings he made between

1982 and 1987, a run of wild, electric releases initiated by *Chav Beside A Window* and terminated by *Blue Corpse* that occasionally featured shil-underhanded collaborators like vocalist "Nancy" and drummer "John" and were characterised by bouts of ferocious atonal guitar. But here he digs deeper and harder into the magic confluence of overtones encouraged by the more esoteric open tunings. His chords sound like they're augmented with barbed wire and his singing – of which there's plenty – is somewhere between Keiji Haino's dense, clean guitar work on *Fushitsushu*'s John Zorn-produced album *Allegorical Misunderstanding*, and Harry Pussy guitarist Bill Orcutt circa "Naz USA". Youngs plays electric bass with a tremolo pulse that sounds a bit like Holger Czukay, and the way he priots odd, beautiful notes straight to the heart of the individual tracks is particularly fearless. Drummer Alex Neilson is the real wildcard. In recent years he has become the most in-demand improvising drummer in Scotland and his playing here is particularly crucial in terms of defining the basic haft of the sound. Beyond even the bizarre physical resemblance – several people on the night asked if Jandek's son was playing the drums – there's obviously a deep level of rapport between the two. During the instrumental breaks, Smith seems to be soloing more in relation to Neilson's tonal and rhythmic suggestions than Youngs's harmonic ones. A less confident musician would have simply hung back and supported Smith as innocuously as possible, but Neilson takes it upon himself to push the music somewhere else, alternating explosive polyrhythms with moments of pure textural abandon and accelerated breaks. At one point he even stands up and starts to sing.

As with every Jandek project, Glasgow Sunday feels like an extended investigation into a single colour

Jandek's 2004 performance at Glasgow's Instal festival was his first ever in a career spanning 26 years. Yet it was more notable for the new group it inaugurated, argues David Keenan

or state, both emotionally, lyrically and sonically. Each track draws its deepest structure from archetypal blues forms, with vocal lulls alternating with extended chord solos and emphatic rhythms. Like the late Albert Ayler, Jandek has a way of hacking the basest/purest of folk forms and extrapolating them into the heavens – or in this case, personal hells. Lyrically there are several references to water, seas and drowning, lots of reds and blues. Some of the tracks are unrelentingly bleak, reading like long, airless litaries of hurt. But there's also plenty of black humour, and at points you can't help but feel that Jandek is poking fun at his own image and playing to the crowd. The moment when he erupts with the line "I made the decision to get real wild", the whole audience explodes into cheers.

Anyone expecting an obscure shot of a Glasgow landmark for the traditionally enigmatic cover photograph will be disappointed in that it seems to feature an unremarkable street somewhere in the USA, judging by the style of the streetlights, the type of cars and the side of the road on which they're parked. Even more disappointing is the fact that although the name of the venue that hosted the concert is included in the text, neither Youngs nor Neilson are credited.

Since this recording, the trio have reconvened for two further performances, one of which, at Newcastle, took the mode of Glasgow Sunday further into realms of compositional and improvisatory flux. The second Glasgow show, performed the following night, saw Youngs switch to acoustic bass and Smith to piano and vocals. While it wasn't as sonically interesting as the two preceding dates, it arguably raised the emotional ante even further. Who would have thought it? Jandek, it turns out, is a group. □





Music for cannots toddler: David Behrman

**DAVID BEHRMAN  
MY DEAR SIEGFRIED**  
BY JACOB

"On behalf of those who are suffering now, I make this protest against the deception which is being practised on them." In 1917 English soldier and poet Siegfried Sassoon spoke out against cynical and exploitative prolongation of war and the sacrifice of human lives to political blundering and deceit. His words, infused with apt gravity by Tom Buckner on *My Dear Siegfried*, reverberate chillingly into the 21st century and the context of current aggressions. David Behrman has for decades created hybrids of electronic and acoustic instrumental music whose intelligent beauty has few rivals. For evidence just sample the wonderful recordings on *The Other Ocean* (1977) and *Leapfrog Night* (1986), interactive computer music of singular delicacy and gracefulness made with help from sympathetic players such as flautist Maggi Payne, trumpeters Rhys Chatham and Ben Neill and violinist Takahisa Kosegawa. But the overt political content of *My Dear Siegfried* is a departure, one that consolidates the importance of Behrman's work. It was written more than a decade ago, inspired in part by Robert Ashley's narrative works, but this timely version was realized "in the dark days of 2003".

As ever with Behrman's music, the initial choice of resources plays an especially vital role. Buckner's baritone and speaking voice and contributions from two other vocalists, Eric Bassness and Maria Ludovica, are set within arrangements for laptop electronics, Behrman's keyboard, Ralph Sammlson's poignantly breathy shakuhachi and Peter Zummo's plangent trombone. The result is, improbably and remarkably, at once somber and gorgeous, a haunting blend of critique and resistant affirmation. The carefully chosen textual material, personal and public, hanging

across decades to the advent of the Second World War, includes excerpts from Sassoon's confiding correspondence with writer Sam Behrman, the composer's father. The introduction of a personal dimension foregrounds, without sentimentality, the impact of political decisions upon actual lives. The historical recurrence of betrayal of trust within democratic societies surfaces vividly, along with Sassoon's horrified awareness of a crucial failure of imagination among the majority of those at home with regard to "the continuance of agonies which they do not share".

Accompanying this important work is an illuminating second CD with five shorter pieces retrieved from the composer's archive. Along with Robert Ashley, Gordon Mumma and Alvin Lucier, Behrman was a member from 1966 until the early 1970s of the Sonic Arts Union, one of the key groups to promote live electronics and experimental performance structures. Behrman is perhaps currently its least known participant, so the long view glimpsed through this release is especially welcome. *Pools Of Phase Locked Loops* (1972), from that influential period of creative agitation, is a homemade synthesizer duet performed by the composer with Katharine Morton Austin. The piece was recorded live in Germany by Rado Brennen, which also commissioned it. The music drifts and glides and pulses, radiating pre-digital striving and excitement. Back in 1974 Tom Johnson, writing in *Wolfe Voice*, suggested that Behrman's use of custom-built electronics could produce a sense that all his pieces were actually "one composition and that the composition changes a little whenever he performs it". Johnson's point was that Behrman's technical know-how matched his musical expertise, and that his performances traced consistent lines of inquiry. There is some justification in that suggestion, but it could be

**Julian Cowley finds  
contemporary resonances  
in a narrative composition  
based on the work  
of First World War poet  
Siegfried Sassoon**

misleadingly reductive without a sense of the integrity of the pieces that emerge in the process.

*A New Room Takes Over* dates from 1969. It's an oddly revelatory and prophetic distortion, using idiosyncratic synthesizer modules, of press conference recordings made by the incoming Nixon administration, a corrupted tissue of evasive utterances, double-speak and half-truths, with the war in Vietnam a crucial and inflammatory issue. Touch Tones is a pioneering 1979 microcomputer performance at The Kitchen in New York. Frankie Mann and Arthur Sadofsky activate a primitive artificial intelligence program with sounds of sandpaper, rattles and an electric drill. A series of upward electronic sweeps alternates with steadily descending pitched dips.

Behrman's creative responsiveness to changing technological possibilities is registered too in *QSR*, presented at The Kitchen in 1988 by saxophonist Jon Gibson, a mainstay performer of American minimalism, with a far more refined interactive computer system. It's a beautifully textured, even luxuriant work, with Gibson meticulously weaving threads of sustained tones upwards and downwards within a layered fabric of those highly personalised and alluring MIDI voicings that have become Behrman's hallmark.

The most recent inclusion is *Viewfinder*, a sound installation recorded at the Parochialkirche, Berlin, in July 2002. Software developed by Ron Kuwila and Eric Singer enabled a video camera to scan the installation space and trigger synthesized tones, generating from detection of physical movements a gradually shifting and undulating sonic environment. To my mind this is one of the most significant releases of 2005 and Behrman is one of the truly indispensable figures in current music. □



prone CD?

On paper this comes over like a shy take on the metaphorical journey through Americana that Van Dyke Parks undertook alone with the semiretired overaged Song Cycle, or with Brian Wilson as Smile. By comparison, head Projector Dave Longtrich has constructed an unusual musical base of wind spirit, women's choir and choir parts. He's pitched and reorchestrated these elements, adding cello instrumentation and singing like an angel and some from The Eagles Greatest Hits Volume 1: 1971-79.

If all this sounds like a super-rich blueprint for a postmodern mishmash, one can still look forward to some brainsteering audacity on Longtrich's part. But trying to glean any meaning from The Grey Address soon becomes a fruitless and enervating task.

The women's choir is used to telling off on songs like "I Sit On The Ridge At Dawn" and "Gilt Gold Scabs," but "Not Having Found" adds out on a halfhearted rhythm, sounding like a parody of latterday Phil Spector. Longtrich, meanwhile, is possessed of a Wilsonian terror and squaky free-soul falsetto, which make him sound like he's coming from the no-man's land between The Beach Boys and Alan Bregman. But when it's double tracked or automatically harmonized, it becomes hard to take.

"Four Along The Potomac" lurches along with some sepiotone 40s dance band clankers lacking any pleasingly and Longtrich's lackluster melody with vigor. But too often the choir and the instrumentalists sound out of tune with each other. On "Fincher Song At Oceanic Parking Lot," this creates a quasi-oppressive ambience and the end of the album comes as some relief.

## MR DORGON GOD IS GREATEST

TEARDROP  
BY DAVID BRUBBER

The xenated image of Dorgan, the San Francisco based fugitive from New York's outdoor scene depicts a harassed, wispy bearded figure with a thousand-yard stare who looks like he's just been kicked out of a Wilemex shack by the Feds on suspicion of mailing anthrax to Democrat senators. He's part of what Todd, sensationally and perhaps unbelieveably, dubs their "Lunatic Fringe," which is to say people driven to extreme and intense acts of creativity regardless of their academic credentials.

Wildly inspired as God Is Greatest is, however, its four faces are much more about method than sounds. "Bagpipe/Hymn," which sounds like it was put together from old LP recordings of the Edinburgh Tattoo, is magnificent, dispiriting and defining the skirling crescendo of the massed pipes from its original context, cutting endlessly back to the same, willing segment, overlying and underscoring it with distant echoes of itself. It is the most pleasurable bagpipe experience you will ever undergo. The very reassurance of the cutting and editing is a part of the texture, rather than a blemish.

"Memorial Day" is composed of more varied and alibiue sound matter — backward voices, dry drunks of rhythm and instances of noise — but remains a monument made up of disengaged drudgery. "Spicy" is relatively brief at two and a half minutes but thrives as much as is tolerable of its Seno, electronic pounding of the

red needle — Fenners on heat. Finally, "Bust Up Short" sounds like Dorgan has attempted to build a Dancehall beat generator that has gone disastrously haywire. All overwhelmingly good fun... but enough of this banal talk of "lunacy" and madness — God is Greatest all makes perfect sense from where I'm sitting.

## ENGLISH HERETIC THE SACRED GEOGRAPHY OF BRITISH CINEMA SCENE ONE OUBAÏ LISTENING CD + BOOK

BY AM FITCHER

This is the second instalment of an ambitious undertaking by the mysterious Oubai Listening label. An ongoing project more than a group, the CD and accompanying pocket booklet pilgrimage guide further elaborates on a mystery surrounding the filming in the late 1960s of *Whitewash* General by the late director Michael Reeves in the Suffolk village of Looe. A witch-hungry some had apparently awakened something that allegedly caused the deaths of not only Reeves, but others who filmed at the same location, like Sharon Lee and John Lennon.

This outlandish theory sets the tone for a quest that goes far beyond satanic fantasy — both in the theoretical depth and fringe-pop-culture width of references. The musical presentation, credited to Robert Nivane and featuring Or Alvin Champagne, Hootie Rodriguez (member of the feminist Prog ensemble Whitewash, which, if real, exists in the shadow realm beyond Google), John Coker and Fred Winkling, Samples from *Whitewash*, field recordings, sound effects, monologues, chants, drones, malleable and medieval, fiddle-led folk, kelp all emerge in and out of a music that ranges between 60s freakout psychedelia, Manson-esque folk, Luvate burlesque and Krautrock. Elaborate and clever as it may be, this is not retro. More than rendering one of a past era, it conjures a highly potent fantasy of the past.

## BRIAN ENO ANOTHER DAY ON EARTH OPAL CD

BY LOUISE GARY

His infrequent vocal outings with Robert Wyatt and John Cale notwithstanding, there are some of his best work he has been waiting years for Brian Eno to sing again 28 years, to be precise, if you take 1977's *Before And After Science* as the solo album that represented Eno's last engagement with his own songs before he moved on to work on other people's voices (1982's *Here We Sleep* simply doesn't sustain its interest in songs — or vocals — long enough to count).

Not that Eno's best music to work as a producer is to have an enormous input into the songs, structure and sound that another artist's song assumes; the absence of lyrics in his own, to use a convenient phrase, Ambient (and usually) instrumental music is similarly a statement that another rationale is in progress. Nevertheless, it's interesting that Eno is on record as saying that he considered songwriting is the most challenging aspect of contemporary music making, how he sings again. Another Day On Earth is a richly textured album, and eloquent in its restraint. The lightly controlled pace on "Long Way Down" or "Gelling Unconscious" produces an emotional content

that is oddly overwhelming. In brief, Eno's approach to vocals has undergone a strategic change: the flattened texture is so to the fore, but there's a new stage of expression too. The catchy wit of, say, *Taking Tiger Mountain...*, is a world apart; the atmosphere is more reminiscent of the far-off spaces of Apollo than the brilliant surfaces of his early solo work.

Repeated listening only shows how clear this album is. There's an engaged relationship about the title track and "Under," a song originally composed for the aborted album *My Sakefuly Life*, Eno's "helpmate" — David Bowie and Robert Fripp among them — do not play their part here, but few could Neil Cuttidge, whose drenched strings beautify "How Many Worlds," or the expressionless voice of Aylo Cole "Bone Boring," on which Cole mimics lyrics too close to Sylvia Plath — "My body/So thin/So empty/Beast for years" — for comfort, against a backdrop of sampled ambient and a strident guitar. The sudden shutdown of its end is brutal.

## FELIPE & FORTE SHAGGY BLACK SOFT ABUSE CD

BY MARG MASTERS

The first collaboration between Miami's Dino Felipe and Brooklyn's Nick Forte is an idea-heavy batch of fiery electronic creations. The two musicians, each of whom has released solo records on Florida's Schmidt, met in 2003 during the latter's US tour. They subsequently began exchanging sounds through the mail, regularly manipulating, editing and adding to the ever thickening mix. The end result is 11 bulging tracks of dense noise that seem to widen, deepen and even reorient with every listen.

Shaggy Black's most obvious referents are noise machines like Pita, Oval and especially Fenners, whose careful constructions are edited throughout Felipe & Forte's meticulously detailed amalgams. But while Fenners's song-line structures often contain in-built melodies, Felipe & Forte's music flows more loosely. The potent alchemy of their juxtapositions makes their noises gain with each other, often evoking more intimate groups like No-Noch Blues Band or The Dead C.

Built through computer manipulation and processing, the endlessly active Shaggy Black colours for outside those lines, stringing everything associated with noisy IDM — spiky glitches, processed bleats, strident jabs and drowning drones — into a building swell. "Pish Her Point" launches phosphy guitar and ping-ponging loops into a sandy canyon, where the muscular howls of "Crisis Credo" seem bent on intruding each other. Tracks using percussion are especially hygroic. "Antester" melts metal sounds into a rising tide of rolling drums, achieving the sun-staring momentum of Davis and Roddick Band or The Boredoms, while Shaggy Black's best piece, "One Needle Per Village," turns rippling static into a rainstorm of tribal thuds.

By the time "Violent Rain" closes the album with an uncontrolled maelstrom, Shaggy Black has made a case for the possibilities of sound manipulation. Within Felipe & Forte's single notes and zests resides a complex infinity of ideas.

## Pamela 2 A Delay Is Better



"Sheer genius from the most gifted and enterprising vocalist/composer/visual artist in the US since the heyday of Joan La Barbara and Meredith Monk. The effects are stunning... Essential" — *The Wire*

## Robert Een Mystery Dances



"Savely post-minimalist" music from this adored singer/producer. "An exhilarating listening experience." — *Musicalink*

## Roger Kleier Deep Night, Deep Autumn



Elliot Spero writes *Deep Night, Deep Autumn* is "a bittersweet record," where "Autumn" melts into "lyrical melody," where "melodic processes and the sensuality of the rich timbres" draw the listener "deeper and deeper into full immersion."

Also: Charles Amirkhanian, Tod Dockstader, Paul Dooley, Paul Gresham, Fred Fitt, Ellen Feldman, Phil Kline, Guy Kluwevick, Ingram Marshall, Marlowe, Meredith Monk, Pauline Oliveros, Samer Shal, Carl Stone, John Zorn, more



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#### The Glass-House Team

# FUCHS/DILL/PERKIS/ SHIURA/SPERRY/ROBAIR SIX FUCHS

INSTRUMENTAL  
BY DAN WARRIBURTON

King Tut! Doherty's head hunch Wolfgang Fuchs has been a regular visitor to California in recent years, appearing on the recent live album on Island Dance. Smith's Balance Point Acoustic ensembles as well as a couple of times at Washington on Ruffic but if you're looking for just one to take to your desert island, go for this. These six spectacularly uncompromising improvisations were recorded separately by Myles Bosen in Oakland in May 2003, with Fuchs joining a Bay Area all-star line-up: trumpeter and occasional Mule contributor Tim Dill, John Shiura on guitar, Tim Perkins on electronics, Gino Robair on "amplified saxophones" (aka percussion) and Matthew Sperry, in what turned out to be the last studio recording he'd make before his sudden and untimely death.

Despite the fact that the album bears his name, Fuchs never comes across as featured soloist, though his awesome proficiency on bass clarinet and soprano saxophone is evident throughout. The musicians are equally at home tying up the dangling threads of micro-improv on "Alucio's Second Intention" as they are getting down and dirty on a gritty drone on "Buttery Concert" — or going totally apeshit: King Tut! Unleashed and acid-reduced Red Muffins would probably cut up in a horror if confronted with the explosive information overload of "The Euphoric Moment," on which Fuchs and co go over the top and round the band — Dill's perfect cornet is particularly effective in conjunction with Shiura's strident guitar. The six tracks appear in the order they were recorded, meaning you can hear how the sextet evolve from the opening hesitant "An Impish Oris In The Vogue" to "A Touch Of Gershwin, Up Wong," which is as alluringly weird as its [anagrammatic?] title. Fuchs's multiformes distort countless the wheezes of Gershwin's and the psychodelic and marish afro-funk. With her vocals dominating in various duets and multitracked arrangements, Robair generates her own personal aura of ethereal that is nevertheless grounded in a sense of intimacy into the primitive clarity of her delivery. Her voice sometimes peaks in a vibrating soprano call, but unlike the crystalline pitch of Josephine Foster, Robair's vocals are more wayward, prone to wandering into flattened tones. This, however, becomes a positive quality in the context of these songs, stressing the human quality beneath their otherwise arcane focus. The overall impact is like experiencing the quieter vocal interludes found amid the fuzzing, low volume impact of Bardo Pond's shuddering wickets, magnified and overlaid with multiple,

reverberating harmonies.

Against her sparse musical backdrop of accordion, organ, acoustic guitar and tambourine, Robair's charming voice and dense, self-applauded harmonies form often wordless songs, stretched out to hypnotic lengths. At their most simplistic, these are like latticed efforts from Nico's Marble Index, replacing that album's cold severity with a warmer, more approachable feel, while leaving room for waiting listeners and flawed imperfections. Otherwise comparisons come less easily with songs such as "Wade," "Neon Light" and "Poppy Opera" occupying a unique space where the slow-motion cascade of a primitive musical accompaniment merges with enigmatic, inaudible vocals and low, trancelike drones, perpetuating a sense of floating, semi-abstract displacement disproportionate to the music's actually calm basic components.

# YUICHIRO FUJIMOTO KINOE

AUDIO DRUGS CD  
BY CLIVE BELL

Yuichiro Fujimoto's tone is full of kittens, toy xylophone, cartoon slatches and his girlfriend. A melodic dulcimer and heartens over a handful of acoustic guitar samples, while bells and spins kick softly in the background. Someone is fixing breakfast. In the far distance a train passes, and eventually the TV goes on — the hyperventilating jitter of Japanese television underlines how calm and peaceful Fujimoto's music has been. This track is titled "Morning Dance".

Fujimoto's first solo album was last year's *Komorebi* on Smalltown Supersound. *Kinoe* (Picture Of Wood) consists of a suite of 13 daydreams, brief episodes of gentle experiment, in which toy instruments and old lo-fi tapes combine with processed electronics and field recordings of domestic activity. "Doo Doo Doo De Music" takes us into an away, while the wordlessly titled "Big Day Man" is an elusive psychopomp. "Without Mistrust" ("Without Blanking") features the sound of pencils sketching and colouring — as with his breakfast bowl denials, Fujimoto likes to play with imagined visuals, as the listener inevitably compares up the picture that is being coloured in.

24 year old Fujimoto has no musical training, and his interest lies in creating simple but beautiful recordings rather than playing music with force. For some the lack of solid musical context will be a barrier, though his spacious manipulation of guitar samples is skilful and effective. His work may be understated, but it's strangely compelling. He works with that wide-eyed childlike and modesty that seems almost a Japanese speciality, and he shares Harold Budd's affection for unadorned prettiness. His ability to find the surreal in the everyday really does rise the rows of Haruki Murakami, especially *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, where a search for a lost cat leads to all sorts of trouble.

# CHARLES GAYLE SHOUT CLEAN FEED CD

BY BRIAN MORRISON

The name on the marquee and the endearingly title might lead you to expect another fine-up of

Gayle's superheated Fine Music. The reality is far less intense, more meditative and accepting than usual. It's in line with Gayle's desire to play more songs, about 'outside' the usual melody-and-changes line. There's even a piano interpretation of "Can't Get Started". When he chuckles cheerfully, "Don't tell anybody what we're doing here. If you tell anybody, it's the start of 'Glorious Days'." You get a feeling that what's going on is part of a bigger plan he doesn't quite want to unveil yet.

That said, the basic soundtrack is still pretty familiar: non-lipped tenor saxophone, rumbling bass from the legendary Stevie, and Donald Gayle's intelligently convincing take on the poly-free style of the 60s New Thing. The sister originals — "Glorious Days", "Shout Of Love", "Healing Souls" — are passionate classics; "Independence Blues" is more measured, a steady statement of intent rather than a stomp song. "Little Jesus Christ" is almost unbearably beautiful, an ecstatic prayer that can't wait to be compared with Coltrane and Ayler. Gayle sounds like no one but himself, though, so-called and acerbic. Years of playing out of doors have sharpened his delivery as well as his stamina, but Steven Lowmy makes an important point in his sleeveless: Gayle is not an untamed shaman, but a trained priest with a strong theological grounding. When the music seems most abandoned, it's often most controlled and logical.

Though Gayle worked with Stone nearly 20 years ago, towards the start of his recording career, the sort's regular working group the band's ploughs his own parallel furrow, while Cleaver works hard to keep the two lines together. They maybe don't give as much, or show as much impact as William Parker and Rasheed Ali on *Touché* On Time, but what album is an undeniable masterpiece, like this one of a tentative move in a new direction.

# GROUNDTRUTHER FEELING DI LOGIC LONGITUDE

THE SIXTY EIGHT

BY BRIAN MORRISON

This is the second in a trilogy of collaborations between drummer Bobby Previte (who's added triggered samples to his acoustic) and eight-string guitar monster Charlie Hunter. The guest star on *Latitude* was saxophonist Greg Oby. Here, it's Di Logic, and how much more comfortably he fits into the mix.

Previte comes from a generation of jazz drummers who don't just know how to combine jazz 4/4s and 6/8s with a rock backbeat. He's able to give a rock groove complex textures. Hunter's set-up allows him to play bass and lead lines simultaneously, so the duo sound as closer to that of a more than usually spacious power trio. While the last record made a thematic journey from pole to tropics to equator to pole, this one works the other way, touching on a more varied and less schematic array of associations — "Transit Of Venus", "March 1741, Cape Horn", "Prime Meridian", "Dead Reckoning" — that touch on our existing ability to navigate the planet. The music is more confidently composed, too. It's a little more in a human element to some light-forging landscapes, as he does over the whaling bells and stormy seas of the Cape Horn piece. Mostly, however, the power

of the set comes from a growing empathy between Hunter (who's never previously found adjectives equal to his deceptive challenge) and the ever inventive Previte.

"Dead Reckoning" is the big one — an awkwardly contorted improv theme marked out by chuggy guitar, which always threatens to break out in Hendrix overdrive. All through the album Groundtruther make you realise what you're hearing, setting up rhythmic and stylistic expectations just to knock them down again. As hard and exciting as anything you'll hear this year.

# ALEXANDER HACC SANCTUARY KNOOLARROW CD

BY SAM DAVIES

Sam Davies, to Alexander Hacc's theory, is music as theology. It aims not merely to soothe, but to argue for the idea that location shapes and determines perception. So Hacc has travelled to New York, Los Angeles, Milan and Gothenburg to collect raw materials from a wide range of collaborators. Most of them stand in at least loose relation to his own background, manipulating beats and electronics with Enslaved's Neobutane, JG Thirlane (Focus), David How (The Jesus Lizard), Aljos Kays (Savans), Casper Bøttmann and members of Gens, Celebrity Skin and Urensia cap. In their exact contributions are left unspecified, although Soggyone Jones of Celebrity Skin lends his name to one track — at more than ten minutes, one of two lengthy compositions, and used to good effect on the soundtrack to Fish's *Alvin's 2004* film *Head On*.

Hacc's theory is not entirely groundless, but the methodology is confused. A better way to trace the complex relationship between location and perception would involve using the same material in different settings, isolating geography as the only changing factor. Instead Hacc's debut solo album proper (he has previously released a soundtrack set) seems more an exercise in dispersing different notions of world-experience.

The continuity of sound and feel to these tracks certainly defies pat arguments about their international sources, suggesting if anything the ways that modern technology can collapse distance. All share a sensibility of post-cold, post-industrial noise management. There's a nagging sense that the noise terrain at work is not extreme enough — the title track itself is a particular letdown in its predictability. But "Sister" has a sick charm, its plundered solo taken from a self-defence course ("After your eye scratch, also back, to give yourself room for a swinging kick to his groin"). "We American Happy Hour" stands out with as chewy fate guitars and hard beat and bang break beats from vintage hip-hop. This album's best moments sound like soundtrack music waiting for the right film. Perhaps if Hacc was to step out from his large supporting cast, a more engaging album would result.

# BORIS HAUF SOFT LEFT ONTO WESTLAND HACED CD

BY DAN WARRIBURTON

Born in Britain and now based in Berlin, Boris Hauf is best known for his electroacoustic improv acts: Eling with dub 13, Burkh and Stangl, Martin Siewert and Billy Rozar, but his



Marc Margulies' Solo Time Within Time



Thimo Lichtenhan's Troposcape



David Lichtenhan's Elegy for My Mother



Anthony Braxton's Concert of Freeform



Daniele Padellaro's Piano Solo

interests extend beyond the cloister of laments, too, as this enterprising solo outing reveals. Like Mats Gustafsson before him, Hauf has forged strong links with the new music community in Chicago, guesting with Kyle Bruckmann's avant punk ensemble Loner, last year's IV now and releasing an extraordinary album of track improvises and guitar duets with Adam Sackelberg, another transatlantic partner in crime. O'Brien pops up here in an extract of a pre-show soundtrack on "Waste Management Business", and the collection of colourful plowies he tests his mic with — tropes, Peaseapple Pstrop, pencil colony — is as offbeat and eclectic as Hauf's working method, which has little time for the snooty "shut shaft" note of the electroacoustic impulse notebook, gleefully opening windows onto the world around instead.

The album begins in the Hauf family kitchen washing up to the strains of Karen Dalton in the background, "just recorded through a cheap little mic on the computer", before slipping into knotty glitch funk. Central is the order of the day as the sleek techno glow of "Tactica Narrows Bridge" is preceded by an assemblage of inscrutable field recordings and the gloomy digital gurgles of "Quiet" blow away to leave the slyest take of "Anne's Little Girl". Which manages to find reason for 1970s-style squelchy synths and critical beatlines such as Ikeda, Pile and Pan Some. Most of the tracks are short, some frustratingly so — the nine Saffa take on "Kimberly Jones's Oceans And The 8 Movie Stars Who Worked In A Gas Station Or Garage" come off as rather inconsequential, giving the impression they could be sketches for longer works. But "Gerny" and "That Man Walk Into Romance" are more substantial offerings, closer to Etage's exquisite, staccato shimmer.

#### HRSTA STEM STEP IN ELECTRO CONSTELLATION (CD) BY MIA CLARKE

After founding Goodspeed Youth Black Ensemble in 1995 and contributing to the group's first two albums, guitarist Mike Moya departed three years later to concentrate on more roots-based music as a member of Malacca. He continued to develop his distinctive guitar style with fellow Montreal outfit Set Fire to Flames and the Loserzies and his main vehicle is now the collaborative project Hrsta.

Unsurprisingly for a Constellation release, their second album, *Stem Step In Electro*, features a series of lethargically paced instrumental and repetitive psych-rock tracks. However, the vocals really give this record spine. Growing track "And We Climb" is interspersed with a desolate chorus looping the lyric "we climb to the light", which, when layered over a mesh of minor key progressions and weighty drums, sounds like a cultish, desperate prayer. Elsewhere, Moya's androgynous vocals take the spotlight, as on the sparse "Blood On The Sun", where his melodies fit comfortably upon a thorny bed of jutting piano and mournful viola.

There are contributions from Goodspeed/A Silver Mt. Zion vocalist Sophie Trudeau, Hangtut drummer Chris Gribble, and former Newcast and, significantly, cultist/vocalist Boon Boon. When partnered with Moya's dramatically spooky monologues, Boon's additional vocals really add

another dimension. They're especially evident on the album's epic centerpiece, "Swallow's Tail". Beginning with a grating, industrial pulse and Moya's emotive, bawling guitar lines, the track builds around a bone dry, haunting vocal duet into an apocalyptic horror story. The occasional rush of violent heavy guitars recalls the majestic metal shimmering of early Lac. Stem Step In Electro is a disc that is at once, but its rich musical colours convey a sense of hope.

#### ACHIM KAUFMANN KNIVES LTD CD BY PHILIP CLARK

"Serious" is the word I'd use to describe this debut solo recording from German pianist Achim Kaufmann. Based in Amsterdam, he is perhaps best known for his work with reedman Michael Moore and Frank Grunow. Indeed he initially turned down a request made a few years ago by Leo Fegley for a solo album to concentrate on his group work, but a consultation with Steve Lucy in 2000 opened up new avenues. "Lucy told me how important it is to do research on your instrument," Kaufmann recalls in the sleeve notes. This album is the result.

Kaufmann's sensitivity exhibits itself not in the post-Bill Evans or Keith Jarrett misapprehension of the word, where it can mean "big-standard classical", but in his keen ear for meaningful note choices and in his pitiful, pared-back structures. The opening track immediately alerts you to Kaufmann's distinctive voice. Its elastic structure and buoy surface is welded together with audibly precise off-tonal motifs, but this discipline liberates Kaufmann rather than boxing him in. On "A dog of mud", and elsewhere his laid hand leads the musical argument and it's tempting to categorise its formal adroitness as Nancarrow-like. The one "standard", Herbie Nichols' "2300 Skidoo", begins out on a limb, but Kaufmann's solo dexterity incorporates Eli Hines, James P. Johnson and stride piano into his overarching concept.

Similarly, the wonderfully titled "Her hair is dark, red, and in its depths ghosts and goblins" — the one piece where Kaufmann really lets his hand flail with flutters of clusters — transforms more low-grade Cecil Taylor cloning into something freshly bold and intelligent. Only the tracks where he wedges numbers and the weekly bit of a vibraphone mallet inside the piano tap dangerously with gimmickery. Otherwise top notch.

#### BASIL KIRCHIN ABSTRACTIONS OF THE INDUSTRIAL NORTH TRM CD BY DAVID STUBBS

Sometime band leader beloved of Billy Eckstine, Basil Kirchin is one of the UK's understated national treasures. He can be valued as a number of levels. Over the years, his work has ranged from providing the soundtrack for the UK comedy scene (Barker's Playhouse in the mid-70s to highly individualistic forays into experimentalism such as his *Worlds Within Worlds* series) today he is not a well-man — he recently lost his second eye to cancer but has indicated his willingness to carry on recording. *Abstractions Of The Industrial North* was part of what Kirchin talks of as his "Imaginary Film" period. That's a cliché today, but not in 1966

when this album was made. One of the initial print run of 500 copies belongs to the Birmingham group Broadcast, who clutch it like a grail. You can hear why. This is the sort of bygone instrumental music which mesmerises a certain sort of contemporary group (Slendebird would be another) who find in it something beyond kitsch — a satisfyingly blurry soundtrack of post-time war paranoia. Broadcast's feelings about it? Abstracters, finally reaching a wider audience, are possibly ambivalent, but for the rest of us, this is treasure from the attic.

As the almost fixated essay title indicates, this is a series of instrumental ruminations on bygone Northern landscapes. With its vibes and hard-core soaked air of nihilist melancholy, its lyrical but muted passages of fife and horn (Kenny Wheeler and Tubby Hayes played in Kirchin's post-group at this time), it could be the soundtrack to some bleak and white study of mid-60s factory life, or perhaps a play with titles like "The Observer" and "High Hour Post", it evokes images of lilies flying and superimposed pictures in the steep hills overlooking the milltown, of late time interludes named only by the prospect of returning to work, of cobblec revues and the occasional surprising moments of vivacity, such as "Packing, Printing And Light Assembly".

The album is complemented with a brief series of literary ones, one of which, "Paging Sullivan", features the fuzzy guitars of a young Jimmy Page. Again, this music, though knowing of its function and purpose, has an unadorned, freshly named air that can only be harkened after or presented in postmodern inverted commas nowadays.

#### TOSHINORI KONDO FUKYO TZRCD CD BY CLIVE REPP

Champagne breath, anyone? There's a luxurious, silky pygmy feel about Japanese trumpeter Toshinori Kondo's solo outing on *Fukyo* — maybe it's those expensive, Charles cathedral reverbs, the ones that deliver the electric cubs reveries through the harmoniser — and yet all these "electric trumpet" solos are improvised live without overdubs. Kondo, who has played with everyone from Steve Lacy to John Wetton, keeps his statements concise, and most tracks clock in at under four minutes. The odd moment of distortion, when he pushes the envelope of his equipment, is all part of the fun.

On "Tijan" and "Mujyo" Kondo splits and splits as if blowing a horn full of helium, or some spook upon liquid liquid of mass, inaudible images of carbon fibre appar, as the trumpet comes up gasping duplets or cascading wholes "Hagen" asks Kondo's sapient squelchiness taken to extremes, notes noisily off the walls like a squeal bawl. Fortunately Kondo has a master plan: gradually the pace is slowed via the thoughtful, evasive chords of "Resister", to "Unger", at seven minutes the longest piece, where the trumpet sings beautifully over an undulating ocean current of a drone.

Kondo, who fathered a shipboard, allows himself to showboat a little, cranking up the notes we see, how to know it's "Pier 20". But this is a far from complacent album, and the sense that Kondo is searching rises the stakes and takes his music to a higher plane.

## DESMOND LESLIE MUSIC OF THE FUTURE

THUNK CD  
BY KEN HOLINGS

If Desmond Leslie had not existed, some parallel history of electronic music might have felt obliged to invent him. Born into an aristocratic family in Ireland in 1921, he was actually known as the fascinating author of the wartime romance *Cavaliers* (even when he published *Flying Saucers Have Landed* in 1953). This landmark volume in UFO literature is perhaps best known today for also having contained George Adamski's account of his encounter with a Venusian near the Mount Palomar Observatory in California a couple of years previously. Such a memory, however, does not do full justice to Leslie's own enthusiastic probing of the flying saucer myth, which elegantly works theology in with Medium, perpetual motion machines with ectoplasm, and the Great Pyramid with ancient Celtic totems. It was the complete New Age package before there even was a New Age. From drive-in movies to alien albums, pop culture iconography would be considerably depleted without it. To find out that during the same time, Leslie was also introducing with tape recordings, creating his own brand of musique concrète, is to glimpse a moment where history and myth brush up casually against each other.

Such a moment of contact has its ambiguities, of course. It is therefore no surprise to discover that the compositions that make *Music Of The Future*, his 1959 collection of recordings, might well have been known to the public in different forms. As his original sleeveless reveal, much of his work was intended as prog/magic music: "The Day The Sky Fell In" comprises a set of tape pieces made for a short sci-fi movie by Barry Shwinn. "Death Di Satan" was originally composed to accompany a TV adaptation of a play by Robert Duncan, first performed at the Royal Court Theatre in London. Meanwhile "Sacrifice Box 3000" and "Music Of The Void: Di Outer Space" are dense narrative acts that lean heavily on persuasive effects and abstracted forms. Due to a licensing agreement made with the Joseph Weinberger music library, however, much of this material was made available on 78rpm discs under different titles for use in radio mystery serials, science-fiction adventures and early episodes of *Dr. Who*. As Jonny Trunk's highly informative biographical notes reveal, Leslie's relationship with Weinberger's was far from harmonious. This did not prevent some of these pieces appearing later on a CD of collection of Weinberger's library music, where it was discovered by Finnish film-maker Mika Teittinen and used in the opening sequence of his extraordinary 1998 documentary *Future: A New Space For Tomorrow*. Transferred from a single acetate copy, *Music Of The Future* offers convincing proof that the past still has more than its own fair share of surprises.

## THE MAGIC BAND 21ST CENTURY MIRROR MEN

PACKED CD  
BY SAM CHAVES

Poole Poole once said, "If you know exactly what you're going to do, then what's the point of doing it?" More and more projects appear to be predicated on exactly that foreknowledge, from

Brian Wilson replicating Pet Sounds' note for note to the ATP concert series *Don't Look Back*, in which artists replay classic albums in their entirety.

It was ATP at the behest of 2003 curator Matt Groening, which orchestrated a reissue of Captain Beefheart's backing group, with players drawn from throughout its history: Gary Lucas and Johnny Winter (duets), Mark Boston (bass) and John French (drums), with auxiliary drummers Robert Williams and Michael Taylor stepping in to allow French to switch to vocals. While The Magic Band's renaissance has not yet featured a full retreat of say, *You're Mask Reveal*, the care with which they replay the knotty material of Don Van Vliet falls in line with this trend and is wonderfully accurate.

Though his records so often struck that elusive spark, the sound of genuine ensemble spontaneity Beefheart could in fact be a tyrant as bandleader, especially in pursuit of their multi-directional rhythms. The Magic Band more than achieve that tapes. Drawn from live performances in the UK and America, all the fluorescent grotesquerie and the global guitar textures of the originals are here. The sound is consistently good. John French's yowl is a more than passable version of Beefheart's, if lacking the full four-octave range. Picking set highlights isn't easy, although Gary Lucas's solo on "Alice In Wonderland" has a lovely liquid inertia. It is a shame "Mirror Man" is truncated from its original 18 minute length — the track loses some of the breathless, pinwheeling persistence that was its charm. For all 21st Century Mirror Men's strengths, however, it's impossible not to feel that the best way to experience this reissue is live.

## MICE PARADE BEM-WINDA VORTADE

FAT CAT CD

BY DEREK WALMSLEY

It's the tale of Mice Parade, the project of multi-instrumentalist Adam Pearce and various friends, to be critically altered into a kind of non-genre of pleasant but unengaged music. Rick through reviews of their work and you'll find a host of nebulous terms — post-rock, IDM, electronica. It would be deeply unjust if Bem-Winda Vortade were to suffer the same fate. This fifth album is their most focused to date, a complex and challenging listen.

Recorded, astonishingly, almost completely live (partly by Interpol engineer Peter Katz), opener "Warm Hand In Ferment" bears a startling resemblance to a multi-layered Steve Reich work — a dense samurai of two or three acoustic guitars, overlaid by glissandi in the upper registers, it then segues into "Rights Wave", a tightly intertwined duet with Kirsten Anna Vahjodottir of Múm. The set, summary textures are overlaid to the point that it becomes unexpectedly overpowering.

Yobals from Pearce and Vahjodottir are understated and subtle throughout the album, their human presence darting in and out of the music only deepens the emotional impact. The trying to visualise foggy childhood memories. Bem-Winda Vortade evokes the miniature song riffs of David Gilmour and the brooding intimacy of Arto Lindsay with a wistful musical backdrop that gives the lie to the bland critical sloganeering with which Mice Parade have previously been lauded.

## MINOTAUR SHOCK MARITIME

A&D CD

BY SARAHANA GLASER

Four years ago, a drama by an unknown musician from Bristol landed on a few desks across the UK. Melodic, the try Manchester-based label, were the first to pick up their ears at David Edwards's floppy tale on the IDM sound. The release of his *Following Broken EP* and subsequent debut album *Chill Chaffs And Willow Warblers* placed Minotaur Shock somewhere between the sugared distillation of Four Tet and the precision surgery of Autechre.

Back then A&D had also contacted Edwards, who leads a double life as the drummer of a group called Bronze Age Fox. Honoring his commitment to his first label, but flattered by the attention of the Siggas subsidiary, Edwards's second album *Maritime* was on the bigger label and is perhaps unconsciously more accessible, though more assured and mature than his previous work.

opener "Muesli" is a supreme Philip Glass-inspired jumble with a spiky three-note refrain repeated over and over with slight changes in pitch, tempo and octave softened by the introduction of a joyful accordion. *Maritime*'s influence oases its lead on "She's In The Dry Dock Now", synths bouncing along until it melts into a fruit-flavored juke, filled with flutes, soft trumpets and tambourines. "Vigo Bay" takes a throbbing rhythm and adds a scorching of flutes, guitar shreds and robust synths until it surmounts into a fragmented version of itself, as if it's been shaken through a sieve and we are listening to the remaining dusting of sediment.

Edwards can fall flat, as on "So Fodish Fishermen" with its derivative synopsized rhythm and warty synths sliding like molten Guyton across the top. Yet we'll forgive him, not least because of his talent for transporting the listener with the simplest of arrangements, as on "Hilly", where microscopic rustles of sound combine for a pre-shunk off-scent funk.

*Maritime* is one game, partly inspired by banging out his own album illustrations and boast enthusiast Warwick. But while it condenses influences as incongruous as Can and Prefab Sprout, you'll find never a sea-shanty in sight. Instead this music's shoreline is made up of instrumental delicacy and subtle arrangements, which bubble, froth and foam washing over the listener with an insistent but gentle force.

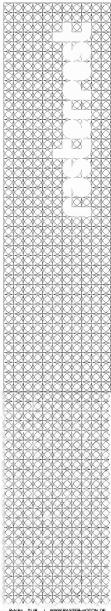
## MARRISSA NADLER THE SAGA OF MAYFLOWER

MAY

ECLIPSE/BEAUTIFUL HAPPINESS COLPY

BY JON DALE

Mariassa Nadler's first album, *Ballads Of Long And Dying*, was a deceptive affair. On first listen, it seemed almost another instalment in the ongoing psych-folk nadation thread. But Nadler's songs reveal themselves slowly, with revealing guitar phrases, spinning pools of electricity and resonant vocals hooking into a history of bleak American backwoods balladry. She may be involved in aesthetic vagueness, but the strength in her writing is its illusory simplicity. The songs on her second record, *The Saga Of Mayflower May*, rely on near identical settings, but there's a mystery etched in the detail, with lightly accompaniments like the whistle or



**406**

Herb Pärt: *Choral Vocations*  
Choral Vocations  
The Parth Legend

**HARRY PARTCH:  
DELUSION OF THE FURY**

**623**

Paul Motter: *Choral Vocations*  
Choral Vocations  
The Parth Legend

**BEAT CIRCUIT:  
HARDWARE REVOLT**

**20**

Beat Circuit: *Hardware Revolt*  
Hardware Revolt  
The Parth Legend

**TECHNO CIRCUIT:  
RETRIBUTION**

**Zeitgeist  
Shape Shifting**

**NOVA**

the label of  
the American  
Composers  
Forum

choral banding vocals binding the album. Folk entries like Sandy Deery or Steefee Span sometimes adopted personae or approached their material with a performative air to let through both the tenor and content of the old songs. These performers acted as conduits for the layered meanings of traditional material. When Nadler adopts a similar tone, she sounds a little too much like she is trying to abstract a certain impact from her songs. While not unpleasant, it comes off as slightly laboured. She is stronger when relaxed, sometimes tempestuous, like a shy, muted Linda Thompson, knowing from within waited gaze and intimated punctum.

## NUDGE CACHED

NUDGE CD  
BY DEREK WILMBURY

Nudge are an interesting supergroup, if that's not too paradoxical a notion. A trio comprising some of Portland, Oregon's shaggiest musicians, their low key releases have played loud and ask some diverse range of labels (Fingerbeats, Ostward Music Co and now Kramley). Key to the inspiration of *Cached*, their third album, is another paradox — despite counting Jackie-O Motherfucker's Honey Owens in their circle, their music is a polar opposite to that group's sprawling slow burn — *Cached* is precise dab pop made of nose, edible sounds, like a nodist driven after-effects of Motown.

Nudge's sounds are accessible, even poppy — shuffling drum machines, guitars edged until they gleam — but are revered so that this familiarity does not breed contempt. "Contact" is an artificial but meant funk jam, a treasure hunt through the lateral explorations of Can's *Like Time* (1989). "My New Year" is an abstracted version of mid-period New Order, distilling their clear ecstatic raves and leaving the burdensome melancholy behind.

The truly compelling aspect of *Cached* is not its construction, but how it continuously reassures itself. Shifty sound edits act as wormholes, reintroducing ideas far earlier in the album to work with them again, deep echo creates shifting parallel waves of smoky jazz and dubwise bass. It makes you yourself long to push the faders, to play with the newbies, to get immersed. As well as soothing the ear, *Cached* also manages to confound your expectations.

## OM VARIATIONS ON A THEME

OM VARIATIONS CD  
BY NICK SOUTHGATE

Repetition is a route to expanding the infinite. Repetition is the theme of the three classically ungrounded compositions Om produce here. The sound is crafted with only the lead boosted distortion of Al Cisneros's Rickenbacker bass and the boulder-weighted awnhammer of Chris Hakala's drums. In their previous incarnation as subterranean San Jose Metal pioneers Sleep, they were joined by Matt Pike's guitar. On this pilgrimage to the source of the riff, however, there is only room for two.

The three tracks are fractional variations on a single archetypal riff of eternal resonance and infernal power. This foundation of thick, sinuous noise is an exercise in the course of the conscious. A more minimal approach would

focus the mind on every tiny variation of tone and timbre. The mind plays hide to find pattern and colour where there is none. Here, the monumental restatement of the same massive element causes all difference. It focuses itself to an utter familiarity that makes it impossible to perceive analytically. Instead the listener must capitulate to its sheer presence. The riff becomes omnipresent, rendering it impossible to believe it has not always been, and will not always be.

Over this plane of sound, Cisneros imports a pseudo-mythical prose poetry. These words are not the statements of a coherent philosophy. Each is a fragment loaded with meaning, chosen for its sound and sense of profundity, not for its metaphysics. They are delivered somewhere between Gregorian chant and an Indian raga, Cisneros proclaiming, "I climb toward the sun to breathe the indrawn asexual" or "The light to freedom gradient rises the called omniscient". These lines he dotes "some as symbolist vehicles to a state outside the field of time and space". And this is the effect of listening to Om, of being bludgeoned out of the physical and psychic constraints of mundane existence, and enlightened in the process.

## ORTHRELM OV

ORTHRELM CD  
BY PHIL FREEMAN

On their first release in a year, Orthreilm have pulled a near total reversal. They used to excite lightly composed nuggets of sound, a dozen or more at a shot. It was rare for an Orthreilm track to reach the two minute mark, so determined were they to force out their bursts of lightning-speed feedback pyrotechnics and jazzy yet post-Grindcore drumming. OV, although foreshadowed by the group's recent live performances, represents a shocking break from that style. It's a 45 minute piece, constructed out of single phrases repeated for minutes at a time with human precision and heed-down. Importantly it sounds like Nick Barts' guitar is plugged directly into the feedback, the bursts of feedback and amp break that opened and closed earlier, shorter Orthreilm pieces are gone.

The effect is startling at first, but by about the halfway mark, 'battering' starts to seem less like an insult, more like an accurate clinical description of this music's effect on the listener. The track begins to shift over time, like a Steve Reich tape piece. Notes and patterns emerge in the hypnotised, dissociated listener's ear, or brain, that may not actually be the ones being played. The dust don't link themselves to one riff or pattern, of course. The piece shifts again and again, sometimes almost imperceptibly, other times like a ship left up on a dark road with the lights out. This is ultra-clean, implacable music that sounds like it was made by man-sized wasps. Impressive, but cold and uninviting too.

## HARRY PARTCH THE BEWITCHED

THE BEWITCHED CD  
BY HARRY PARTCH

The moment that Harry Partch began to design and build unconventional instruments, his security was guaranteed. Storage, maintenance and transportation costs were prohibitive, and Partch was always broke. Because players had to

be trained in the use of these unfamiliar instruments whenever performances were to be staged, extensive rehearsal time was required. The performances themselves were low and far between, and often they failed to meet Partch's exacting requirements. This particularly affected the reception of his large-scale ritual theatre pieces, which were considered for many years to be over-ambitious and unrealistic to stage. Luckily, however, some of the performances that did take place were regarded as a satisfactory standard, and we now have an opportunity to reassess their worth.

Perhaps the most successful of them in every respect is *The Bewitched*, which Partch completed in 1956. In the following year the University of Illinois staged the first performance, and that's what we have on this CD. Originally, Partch issued the recording as a limited edition LP set on his own Gate 5 label, and the few copies that were primarily to mail order customers. Years later, OM rescued *The Bewitched* to a much wider audience and to great critical acclaim. But the New World music is something else. For this edition, the recording has been cleaned up to an almost miraculous degree, and it sounds marvellous — you'd be forgiven for thinking it was recorded just last week rather than almost 50 years ago. For the first time, Partch's unique instrumentarium is brought vividly to life. The fact that the performance itself is strong, and consistently so, makes this a must have.

## ELLIOT PERKINS EURODAX EXPRESS

EURODAX EXPRESS CD  
PUBLIC RECORD CD  
MOVEMENT FOR AIRPORTS

EURODAX EXPRESS CD  
PUBLIC RECORD CD  
ULTRA-RED

ULTRA-RED CD  
PUBLIC RECORD CD  
WR

WR CD  
PUBLIC RECORD CD  
BY KEN HOLLINGS

Sound, as ultra-red has observed, is a promiscuous entity, rather than present itself as an untempered continuum in the same way that sight does; it gives the very active illusion of being able to cross boundaries and traverse space. Technic ability to define itself geographically is one clear aspect of the phenomenon. With their Public Record label, Ultra-red have taken this illusory shift in temporality a stage further by locating it digitally in space, which is to say anywhere at all.

Log on to the Public Record site at [www.publicrecord.co.uk](http://www.publicrecord.co.uk) and move yourself out onto the Creative Commons, a decentralised extension of the continuing struggle against increasingly aggressive digital rights management that is still far from resolving itself. In keeping with traditional notions of the commons as a collective resource open to all users, this more utilitarian approach to the useful development of copyrighted material quickly shades over into issues of national identity and its boundaries to the self. Not surprisingly, some of the archive material available as free downloads from Ultra-red and associated docks with issues of border control, migrant workers and political refugees. Just as more of the planet is tuning to desert, so a greater percentage of its population

is finding itself in transit, without recognized papers or personal identity. The authorities in New York, for example, have still no clear idea of how many migrant workers perished during the destruction of the Twin Towers on 11 September 2001, as there was no official record of their presence.

The promiscuity of sound captures these moments of transition and disappearance with the greatest agility. Movement For Nations offers a building series of remises of a post-9/11 event carried out by Ultra-red and Karak Atak at Fiumicino Airport in 2001, a complete recording of which can also be found on Ultra-red's *Play Karak Atak W/ta Border Sounds* is a persuasive montage of field recordings and interviews with cops and officials along national boundaries running from Italy and Slovenia to the way through to Poland and Germany. Created in collaboration with photographer Shahidul Alam from the IIRK Project in Bangladesh, who works with migrants in the Indian subcontinent, *Evacuate Express* by Elita Pridmore includes recordings sourced from the Chittagang shantytowns, deportation centres throughout the European mainland and the back streets of Odisha. In each case the handling of sounds and voices is deft and the listening sensitive to their overall effect, so downloaded some of these today and give your iPod something to think about.

## ARIEL PINK'S HAUNTED GRAFFITI WORN COPY PWW TRACKS CD

BY MATTHEW NORMAN

Originally released on the miniscule Rhyko Records, and now available via The Animal Collective's imprint Paw Tracks, *Worn Copy* feels like an epoch-defining record. Furthermore, one series that with this, plus the recently reissued *Delusions* and the imminent *House Arrest And Lower Bay* (collectively forming the *Haunted Graffiti* triptych), Ariel Pink has engineered some unlikely series feedback which threatens to cosmologically trigger events in his life.

How can tracks that sound like poorly recorded demos of early 1980s NY outtakes peek such a punch? Ariel Pink's abandonment of sophisticated audio technology (he records onto an MSX Yamaha cassette right track in preference to ProTools wizardry) doesn't represent a gesture of lo-fi inspired defiance so much as sheer unguardedness. Hearing music composed in such insular conditions is akin to entering a parallel dimension. Here is a record which reveals itself after repeated listenings. As one's ears acclimatise to the gloom, details such as Pink's human beatbox drumming and the delicacies of the production become gradually apparent. It's his insistence on, to quote 60s sage Baba Ram Dass, the "here and now" which contribute to the transcendentalist nature of tracks like "Beparated Earth". In an act of monumental generosity he claims to be trying "to put Beverly Hills on the map", so to forge a folk music in the gutter at the centre of the media universe. *Worn Copy* is drenched in Norman Klein's *Los Angeles*, Los Angeles. And *The Essence Of Memory* as a zone of permanent amnesia produced through proximity to Hollywood.

Pink is a fantastically gifted songwriter. "Life In LA," "Anxious" or "James Last Like Jewels" could easily be taken by Orin Leroy or Ric Ocasek as perfect pop past, yet their own conception explicitly resists this. *Worn Copy* has as its engine the Bonny Ayle and Meatloaf, not as imitations of the global media machine, but as impoverished minstrels scuffling through the rails and back alleys of the City of Angels.

## RESIDUAL ECHOES

HOLY MOUNTAIN CD

BY DEREK WALMSLEY

An offshoot of the recent interest in Death Metal, Black Metal and various other shades of the Metallic is a focus on volume that verges on the fetishistic. Music gets harder and heavier, creating a black hole which drags all other sounds into a super-dense sonic singularity. This convergence towards a uniform, perfectly tailored hard rock often seems as paradoxical as a pair of jet-set black lewis being made to measure. In contrast, *Residual Echoes* retain some faith in roughly cut, raggedy jams that spill noisily and dangerously outwards – fits are multiplied over an on-again-chasing fly, echoed vocals buzz like a killer bee tearing itself out of a manhole.

Naturally the project itself came together in postmodern fashion. Adam Payne's multi-instrumental four-track experiments were encouraged by the likes of Cornets On Fire and St. Ogden Of Admittance, and the album streams together contributions of leading British Echoes members with no production values. "Slam" is a headbust meltdown that somehow solidifies into a direct steal of Carl's "Nether Sky" slip, embedding Kneadles Nerves through a psychotic boogie back beat. The rattling, ban-dy momentum is only broken when Marcello Fama's distorted horn starts to bum holes through the tape.

After 30 minutes of this bristling encounter, *Residual Echoes* are playing just an adoration – heavy ears drift gently away on drums and an understated electric guitar thrives along in its own world. Still, the preceding band of rock-metaphors, various evoking Overhang Party, Eric's Trip and Acid Mothers Temple, so be bewitchedly chaotic it evades definitive categorisation.

## MARC RIBOT SPIRITUAL UNITY

BY PHIL FREEMAN

*Spiritual Unity* is guitarist Marc Ribot's take on the Allotey Ayle songbook. But it's an understatement (electric guitar, trumpet, bass, drums) transforms Ayle's marching band melodies into raucous stomps in the spirit of Sonny Sharrock's 1969 solo debut, *Black Woman*. Ribot's loose strumming gives way to almost post-punk snarl that sound like he's falling down the stairs with his fingers caught in the strings. In the meantime, trumpet Roy Campbell seems to be channeling Don Cherry more than Don Ayle. He camps out on the horn's super register, occasionally engaging with the melody but almost never with Ray. They're playing simultaneously, but not together, it's a *live* dissonance sometimes, but works quite well over the long haul.

Powerhouse bassist Henry Grimes, who actually

played with Ayle (but never, as far as I know, with Sharrock), pulls away from the pack himself, apparently determined to regain the status he lost in 30-plus years away, as fast as possible. Under those circumstances, a little spotlight-hunger is understandable, as his thumping and driving, and his near total obliqueness to his bandmates' contributions, is easily forgiven. Drummer Don Ayle, meanwhile, hails everything together with well-placed, typhoon-like numbers. He's a perfect conductor, thumping along almost primly, adding subtle accents here and there but mostly just keeping time. Ribot's vision of Ayle as composer, rather than a one indie rock fave introduced to the saxophonist's work by Revanant's Holy Ghost box can quite easily love – blaring, technically impeccable and often beautiful.

## TERRY RILEY & STEFANO SCODANIBBIO DIAMOND FIDDLE LANGUAGE WIRGO CD

BY BRIAN MARLEY

Stefano Scodanibbio and Terry Riley's 1997 debut recording, *Late Afternoon Among The Crocodiles*, was a kind of beauty its ease. Listening event grounds would an audience who ordinarily wouldn't give such music house room, and on the back of the CD's success Riley and Scodanibbio toured the material. *Diamond Fiddle Language* is their follow-up. Recorded at three different locations between November 1999 and April 2000, it reveals how their new material and their approach to it evolved during that period.

The title track comes in two versions, both of which are based on the periboricano *Raga Malkaus*, a Hinduist composition of relatively simple structure that has great expressive potential. On the first version, Scodanibbio moves from auto drone on his double bass to a table-like pulsing of the body of the instrument, some of which is swallowed up in Gerry Riley's, who plays. Riley, who plays synthesizer throughout, frequently varies its timbre, much as a chamberlain responds to changing circumstances.

The second version, recorded nearly a year later, is almost twice as long and rather different, in that Riley interpolates the melody using "The Pharaohs' March", a composition in *Raga Patoli* by the late Pandit Pon Nath. There's a splendid sequence that begins in the 11th minute in which Scodanibbio, unaccompanied at first, adorns both the rhythmic and melodic complexity of the piece by simultaneously plucking and bowing his bass. Riley's interventions in the minutes that follow are sensitive and supportive, and Scodanibbio is consistently respectful.

Great play is made in the slowest of the wealth of timbres, hues and textures that Riley gets in his instrument, but some of the timbres he selects set my teeth on edge, such as during the exposition of *Raga Malkaus* on the second version of "Diamond Fiddle Language". To try to imagine a Bentleggs group with a kazoo soloing – that's what it sounds like. Pitch-bending, too, which is an essential means of expression in a music based on melodic lines, seems mechanical and utterly charmless when played on a synthesizer, displaying none of the

# YCOPEPOD

Copepod Records is a new label formed by Alex Ward and Luke Barlow to issue their music and other intriguing material that catches their attention.

Releases for July 2005

Alex Ward **HAPLESS DAYS (POD001)**  
Two years in the making, Ward's first foray into songwriting displays a baffling array of instruments and styles to understand his lyrical observations. Rock, jazz, blues, folk, hip and hi music, and pure noise are all in evidence, providing the acoustician for the words to run endlessly round in self-deceiving circles.

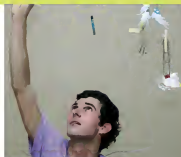
Alex Ward / Luke Barlow / Simon Fell / Steve Noble **HELP POINT (POD 02)**  
Improving on their first, featuring Ward on clarinet, the world-class sax and drums pairing of Fell and Noble (Electric Blue, SFO), and the ear-catchingly unusual sound of Alex Barlow's keyboards. The music shifts effortlessly between groove, atmospherics and dense abstract interaction.

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[www.copepod.co.uk](http://www.copepod.co.uk)

# Size Matters

3", 7", 10" and other misshapen formats



Reconstructing America: Bobby Brindson

It has been on my timetable for a while now, but it's still not easy to get an exact handle on *Grindhouse/Isotonic* (Not Not Fun 10") by **Bobby Brindson**. As with most of the releases on this distinctive LA label, the dynamics here are out of kilter, but they're different from Not Not Fun's standard fare. Bobby is something of a crooner (at least in this context), doing solo versions of actual songs that feature actual singing. And I can't help but be reminded of Van Dyke Parks's *Discover America* album, even though the music here is pretty cranked throughout. There is an off-base sophista underpinning to the sound, as though Bobby were an ethnomusicologist reconstructing American New Wave for some sort of scientific journal. And his efforts to do so are very cool.

A nice little package of 7" singles arrived from Boston's Beanshaped label: **Sylvante's** *Deborah's Echo/The Mist* (*Beanshaped 7"*) pairs two light, glossy electronic instrumentals that sound pretty nice on a mixtape such as this one. "The Mist," in particular, has a very soothing guitar figure that puns like a hot kitten. **Jessica Bullard** is represented by four tracks on *Live On WPMV*, *Amsterdam* (*Beanshaped 7"*). Her vocals and acoustic guitar blend with haunted atmospheres, sounding especially lonely and lovely on her cover of Patsy Cline's "Faded Love." *Three Offspring* is *No Religion/Spring Awakening* (*Dreams Of Everlasting Pain* by the Czech/Israh monies).

**Anaëme**, probably best known by their Nurse With Wound collaborators. *The A Side* is a sharp slap in the face of egomaniacal domestic ecstasy (and the horrors that are committed in its name); the tip is a candy-centred, electroacoustic dip into the trauma noise trough. Very worth a swing.

**Brother And Sister** are a guitar/drums duo from Minneapolis. This is a very stepped down and neo-sonic sort of garage punk, but thankfully escapes the accepted genre models their self-titled debut *Brother And Sister* (*Oxym 10"*) has a rather beautiful, supidly to it that is sure to tickle many discerning genre fans. The dog sound effects are a nothing, but a toaster-punk genius move, as is their virtual theme song, "B-e-s-t-I-S-t-i-s-t-E-v-e-r." At its best, their approach manifests a sort of classical Detroit scum present, so you get that scuzzed, dig this.

**Danielle Lemaire** has lately been sighted most often as lead of Jaba, but she also has a new solo record out, *Perfect Surroundings* (*Inner Landscape 10"*). Her keyboards alternately trinkle and tremble, and her vocals sound a whole lot

less mysterious than her lyrics. If you don't pay attention to the detailing you can almost convince yourself this is "normal music" (or something). Then you realize there are top-line instruments hopping around in the background and the lyrics, and the lyrics appear like something you might find in the labors of Mayo Thompson or Robert Wyatt. Indeed, if either of those gents performed in drag now and then, they might not sound unlike Danielle. She does some great quirky organ playing as well. Reminiscent of the music you'd hear at an organ bar on Saturn—a feelingscape for sure.

Get a couple of stunning latest split 10"s on the new United Fy Music label from New Zealand. **Eye** and **These Parks** are paired on *S/T* (*United Fy Music 10"*). Eye drums the always great Peter Stapleton and two guitars, all of whom chime like night insects in a piano factory. *These Parks'* track is a totally devoted to not-sacking that rambles into little fields of mice, spins in there until they run away then goes skulking around looking for more prey. It's a veritable rock opera. The other label is shared by **\$100 Band** and **Split \$100** include Alastair Galbraith and Mike Doley (*11*) and they sound more like a band of thieves than a pack of transverse kings (which is what they claim to be), but what do I know? The violin, drums and electronics pile up into mighty raw little courtesies. Split are more about loaded figures of instruments, voices and subterfuge. And they even look up their grooves so you can keep circling forever. How considerate is that?

For my own taste, Chicago's **ZZZZ** are a little too haptic to listen to for a full LP but on their new split to the Czech Republic's **Joe Dana** (*Polymint 7"*), they sound much more palatable. "Assassination Fok" is still awfully as speedy kitchen-inflated muth rock, but it is a discrete entity, the song is not without a certain charm. And the pairing with U2's typically screwy "Freaks" makes sense, as their hybridizations are equally stark. Here, they manifest themselves in their most glibly Proggy form, and everything's OK. (BC)

**Bolting The Animal** in *The Sky* (*Pseudo-Anaëme 3" CD-R*) by **The Witches Cupboard** is actually a solo punk from James Ferraro of *The Skaters*. The sound is not that far removed from that of the group, but here Ferraro is more concerned with pushing everything into the red. The way his fiery dissonant strikes at the guitar during the opening track brings to mind *The Dead C* at their apogee juncture, since *Heine Said This*, while

the soft patter of cardboard bar drums and Ferraro's high, needy wail sound like the muttering of dirt-caked troglodytes. The advanced closing track transcends, with a guitar figure that has disintegrated from the staccato leeching melancholy howl as the staccato leeching of still, flesh spurs voices. (JD)

**Diecio P Lagrimas**, aka **Un Cuddle Reverse** **Dans l'Herbe**, seems to nest in the unapologetic, minimalist format of the 3" CD. Moreover, his apparent diffidence extends to the naming of his vocals, which are more like murmured, trailing away apologies for riddles. So, after *Like A Packed Cupboard But Not Quite...* comes *Allas sans (mapa, les, border, how...)* (*Delirator 3" CD*). Yet despite Lagrimas's intention (fido, guffaw, olives and salubria as well as wops and lops), this isn't quite the pretty eclectic, mildly spaced proposition you might expect. In fact, these pieces are as troubling and mysterious as unusual noises emanating through the walls from next door. Take the opening "When," in which a kalimba ticks over a rhythm lock that sounds like the footsteps of children being hurriedly evacuated down a staircase, as a melodic response, then holds a low, booming note as the footsteps fade away. "Time," too, is an ingratiating mix of what might be strange creaks—perhaps on running water, falling cinders, as vocalists. Pola barely appears herself on the piece, humming as if engrossed in some tedious task, dead to the bizarre sonic activities taking place around her.

"Overcare" has a nocturnal air about it, the air heavy and scented, with distant heaving and the gentle pounding of African instrumentation, but still bags the question from behind the curtains, what are they up to out there? "Miss" uses the temperature rise as the caisson of ethnic/redneck ingredients begins to come to the boil, while "War" strikes a more openly menacing chord, with its strident acoustic lode delivered like the repeated question of a determined inquirer: while "Atlas" at last reveals Un Cuddle in his full and true colors, mauling all his instruments like an invasion force of clockwork soldiers. A world of detail here for those prepared to peer through its peephole.

"I love cool and intellectual music—I don't plan for my music to be appreciated by children," declares Danish musician **Waks**, and it's hard to dislike the stern out of his. In fact, too, to dislike *Darwin's* (*Delirator 3" CD*), especially its cover, whose photomontage includes a

Residents-like eyeball staring down from a tree at a cloud that has apparently forgotten how to float. *Darwin's* is a bizarre toybox of mishapen concoctions and implorations. Its spinning, unlit track, set amid a quiet torrent of organs and xylophones, features what sounds like a doll that spouts Gregorian chant when you yank the string in its back. Another features similar plastic belchings of player piano, another feels like an attempt to mass-market a plastic toy version of Kano No 1. The ninth and final track might be the imagined soundtrack to a Japanese ceremony. All perfectly useless, in the useful sense of the word.

**The Rantucky Knobs**, fronted by US experimentalist David Rothbaum, present a curious package in the form of *Deuce* (*Experimental Music Research 3" CD*). Its cover (another map) is the sort of thing you might find aspartan on the side of a Harley Davidson, while titles like "Dangertown Worman" and "Take It Sissy" feel like deliberate misnomers. In fact, *Deuce* is a three-way exchange between Jonathan Zorn's analogue synthesizer, David Minda's computer and Rothbaum's amplified clarinet, which adds some interesting, sleek textures to what is otherwise a ragged, richly engaging electronic free improv exercise, all crackle, swirl, retransmissions and plunger.

**The Virgin Passages** *S/T* (*ESR 3" CD*) invites in either a smaller little wooden box, the sort you might keep spare buttons in but which, with its red-stained cover artwork and mangle, it feared might contain a severed hamster's head or some such and forebore from opening, its accompanying paperwork, signed at the edges and listing four titles including opener "Mother, Daughter, Father" and "Hate, Hate, Hate," a gutsy sort of Death Metal. All the latter track, in which the group chant like members of some Kersh-type cult, is certainly sinister, but *The Virgin Passages* turn out to be rife bugs (and girl). These James Nicholls-penned songs are quite wincey, a peculiar, neoleptic strain of indie pop whose estranged, indistinct instrumentation adds to the overall feel of heady romantic lethargy. Pick of the bunch is "Dihl Comedians," whose acoustic wail is adorned by Elio Garza and a mournful, muffled whew—imagine the schoolteacher in the old Charlie Brown TV series kidnapped and bound in a closet, trying out for help. OK, pretty sinister, I suppose. (DS) ... Reviewed by Byron Coley, Jon Dale and David Stubbs



stability of voice or singing).

More successful in the main is the shorter piece on offer here, "Irony," based on the diabolical in musica tritone that in the late Middle Ages was considered to be a dangerous and rather edgy prospect. Here too it strapes some virtuosic improvising from Soodenibito and Riley, and the music is robust and intriguing.

## ROLLERBALL CATHOLIC PAWS/CATHOLIC PAUSE

BY LOUISE ORAY

Just because Rollerball, a quintet from Portland, Oregon, have used any of their last ten albums to present a coherent vision of what they may (or may not) be, it doesn't mean that Catholic Paws/Catholic Pause will be any different. Indeed, this 11th studio album, taking its title from a not especially edifying homophonic coincidence, often sounds like the product of several groups, the traces from the unstructured free jazz of "Jack to Joe" to the meticulously staged jux of songs like "Ezule" and "Lambies" is a long, long one. But just possibly it's this journey that the listener is meant to keep in mind.

Traces will often incorporate what seem like found sounds, highway ambience, engine noises, more arcane field recordings. The chord strutting waltzes on "Marta Seger" probably don't come from the bottom drawer of an ethnomusicologist, but one has the feeling that they like to be. The one pattern that emerges from this most catholic approach to songwriting is that; for every ear-bending squall of one track, you know that its successor will be a rather good song, in the mold of Lu To Leng or the Devics after an all-night bender. The swaying, slapping songs on "Ederlee" is a wonderful effort at staying upright and, while pieces like "Quench" — a spoken word intro on which Stevie Nicks' Podest's delivery is slurred and so too is Molly Griffith's collo — are challenging, then the trail of Riley's pouncing guitar on "Ezule" or Griffith's dead strings on "Marta" are well worth the bewilderment.

## ROWE/M/NAKAMURA/ YOSHIMIDE ROWE/M/NAKAMURA/ YOSHIMIDE

BY ERIN SKED  
BY BRIAN MARLEY

Last week a friend asked, "That new Estuile set, is it very noisy?" Meaning, is it a wispen-pet, semi-scale series of dissonant sonic events scattered thinly across silence? He was looking for something akin to Good Morning Good Night, an austere and occasionally forbidding Estuile release by Sachiko M. Yoshimura Nakamura and Otsuro Yoshimide. But this Estuile recording is a very different proposition to that, and the difference isn't due solely to Keith Rowe's addition to the line-up.

This four-hour performance, recorded live during AMPLE 2004, addition at Backbkk, Berlin, is fascinating for a number of reasons, not least of which is the immense concentration they manage to sustain over such a long period of time. Most New readers will by now be familiar with the glassy mosquito whine of Sachiko M's

empty sampler, Nakamura's coarser grained and sometimes staccato/blatant no-input matrix board, Rowe's croaky turntable loops, bumps, scoops and crashes, and Rowe's pitch-bend drones and sculpted noise on tabletop guitar and electronics. Quietness has a valuable role to play in their music, but the silences in this performance are few and far between. And anyone who thinks that players of the new electroacoustic improv merely have minimal rather than seek in the moment's engagement should listen to the fiercely intense opening section of the second disc. This is also where the link with a more traditional strand of free improvisation can be perceived, though the music's guise and how it behaves could hardly be more different.

Each of the players provides a sleeveless in which they reflect on the music and how they feel about it. Otsuro discusses the role that memory plays in making music of such long duration, how one can become fully immersed, even lost in it, to the point where "sounds are heard" rather than being made. Nakamura's piece, which works in a just counterpoint to how an improvising musician deals with his material and the circumstances in which he finds himself, consists of everyday jottings about cooking and eating, washing clothes, taking phone calls (and giving formulaic or unhelpful answers to questions put to him), etc. Wisely, none of them try to summarise what took place — the music is, as they will agree, best heard, not described.

What's most impressive about the performance is that it's not a typical one-hour set repeated fourth or stretched artificially. Moreover, despite its extreme length there are no dull or awkward moments, nothing feels effortful or contrived, everything simply works, and works well. The seemingly disparate elements form an entity, achieve a wholeness, and provide a feeling of completeness that rare in music of any kind. Suffice to say that in years to come this is likely to be considered one of the key improv recordings of its time.

## CARL RUGGLES THE UNCOVERED RUGGLES NEW WORLD CD

BY JULIAN COMLEY

Lawrence Gilman, an early contemporary reviewer of Carl Ruggles (1876-1971), described him emphatically as "the first uncanny to enter American music," and more revealingly as "the master of a strange, tormented and disturbing discourse." The lament is contained within a notoriously narrow channel. In 1980 the composer's works were moved as a double LP set in the CBS Masterworks series — four vinyl discs sold for a dozen prices produced during a 95-year lifespan. Titles of individual pieces, however, testify explicitly to the unbounded nature of Ruggles's aspirations. Son Reader (taken from Brower's description of Shelley), Men And Mountains, Angels, Evocations, Portals. He may have conceived music as a series of apertures opening onto infinity, but there's no New Age nebulousness in Ruggles's compact canon. Skipped in Beck's contemporary.

Beck's music is only expressive and Wagner's harmonic yearning he composed in a rugged, uncompromising and self-reliant language that conveys a steely gaze reaching into remoteness

Pianist Donald Bernstein, after excavating unknown works by Charles Ives, has turned his scrupulous attention to uncovering music by the other still untaken later from the wilds of American modernism. The project in part pays homage to Bernstein's own mentor, pianist and music editor John Kirkpatrick, who became the desert and most enduring in a series of distinguished students to Ruggles, that included Charles Seeger, Henry Cowell and Lou Harrison. Kirkpatrick's authoritative editorial work on manuscripts furnishes some of the material recorded here for the first time: Woods, March, Piano Organum and Valse Lente for piano, and Mood for piano and violin.

Evocations, previously recorded in an orchestral version, appears here with the subtitle Four Chants For Piano. Organum, its title suggested by the composer's close friend Edward Kesho, also appeared in orchestrated form in the 1980 Complete Music release, on this occasion, it's in a two piano version. Bernstein plays a transcription of Angels, composed originally for six muted trumpets, and Exaltation, a worship hymn written after the death of Ruggles's wife. Four songs for soprano are included too. Ruggles favoured a dissonant idiom and refused the consolations of conventional musical resolution. There is nonetheless a deep coherence to the vision expressed in his published works and an affecting intensity. The uncovered Ruggles does nothing to dilute that intensity or to compromise that coherence. Bernstein's fine performances just confirm the singularity and raw integrity of American music's last icon.

## CHARLIE SCHMIDT XANTHE TERRA STRANGE ATTRACTORS AUDIO HOUSE CD

BY MIKE BARNES

The first thought that comes to mind when listening to Xanthé Terra is that it sounds rather like John Fahey. One feels a bit lazy banding it so, except the similarities rest that not only was Schmidt's brother to Fahey, the late guitarist was his mentor, he played one of Fahey's old guitars, and the CD is dedicated to his memory. And, amazingly, one of these tracks in Fahey's possession at the time of his death ended up on a posthumous archival Best Of CD by mistake. It said, apparently the guitarist wrote this to be an aural accompaniment of an imaginary walk on Mars.

Surely Fahey would approve of this parson of sorts. Not that Schmidt is simply emulating Fahey — far from it. The links most easily drawn with the late guitarist's trademark acoustic style — which was abandoned then re-emerged in his last sessions — is the steady plating track at which Xanthé Terra progresses. But as with Fahey, there's no hint of sluggishness. Instead, there is a peculiar poise and strength of line in pieces like "Kamante Waltz" and "Chilum Heights Blues", that acts as a strong framework for the swelter of pop, sleight-of-hand rhythmic shifts and punctuations with atonal chordings. Schmidt's compositions are often exquisitely melancholy, but he slips into a higher gear on "Acidella Pierella".

Schmidt also effectively crosses classical and hymnal elements into his compositions. In this respect he recalls another guitarist who tips his hat to Fahey: Gary Lucas, who has

successfully tackled all manner of music from Wagner through Bernard Herrmann to mid-20th century Chinese pop tunes. Schmidt generally operates at lesser speed than Lucas's often dazing velocity, but is no less impressive or menacing. He excels here on Firebird, where he weaves together themes from Stravinsky's ballet to breathtaking effect. On "Slow Mountain", which begins with Tchaikovsky's Marche Slave, Schmidt ends up parting a big grin on the face of Greg's in the Hall Of The Mountain King and commands it to dance around, Klemer style.

## 718 NOWISE ASSAULT SUB JAM CD

BY KEITH MCLENE

Sub Jam is a Chinese label founded by poet, journalist and musician Yan Jan, a pioneer of independent and experimental music in his home country in recent years. China has witnessed a low-key explosion of underground musical creativity, thanks largely to P2P file sharing over the Web, overcoming attempts on the part of the authorities to moderate, oversee and control a burgeoning alternative culture. These two collections are more than clues to be enjoyed for the samizdat thrills they might produce in Western listeners; they both contain some excellent live-field electronic music. "718: the 'formation of electronics', it says here) is otherwise known as Sun Lu, a central figure on the scene and a participant in various musical and non-musical projects. His work on *Nowise Assault* draws on both lighter and darker shades of Ambient, underpinned by insouciant downbeat beats and subtle ethnic influences. "One/The Funeral Song Of The Cosmos" suggests one of the more interesting artists on the Fax label such as Ikuo Iwano, "Musician In Zant", though absolutely overbearing, nevertheless showcases 718's perfectly controlled build-up of shimmering textures and electronic detail, making for a deeply hypnotic listening experience. Similarly *Nowise* and *Assault* in the manner of some of Richard M. Kirk's Tibetan-influenced Techno.

After present themselves as a disc consisting of the mysteriously released DS and MHR, although in effect their release is a double-header rather than a collaboration, with each artist more or less alternating tracks with the other. The industrial-fueled MHR offshoot trend towards dense, industrialist BNP of sounds ("SSK Come") even opens with "heavy old Ruggles" fully analog, while again significant for a young Chinese audience can only be guessed at. The more sophisticated work of 88, meanwhile, particularly on the "Kiloga Desert", sets is sharp, intricate and fully disorienting. Both of these Sub Jam releases serve notice of interesting creative developments in mainland China and are worthy of investigation.

## SI-CUTDB FROM YEARS: BEACH ARCHIVE SI-CUTDB CD

BY COLIN BUTTNER

At times the prolific Douglas Beards, aka Si-Cutdb, can appear overly indebted to German electronics, but closer inspection of his work

# The Compiler

Various artists: reviewed, rated, reviled

Bringing the House down: Marshall Jefferson



In some quarters of Chicago, they still nurse a small grudge that the town is not always credited for its role in the dissemination of Acid House, that it has become either conflated or even supplanted by the Detroit version. **Can You Jam? Chicago Acid And Experimental House 1985-95** (Soul Jazz 2002) makes amends for this. Extensive slow-motion feature interviews with players such as Tyne and Marshall Jefferson, as well as an essay by dance music historian Tim Lawrence, which meticulously plots the history of the music's growth in Chicago. He sees his starting point: Frankie Knuckles's proposition that Chicago House was "doo's revenge" after rock DJ Steve Dahl had made the city's focal point for his Das Dooz Sacka movement—it was here that Dahl blew up 50,000 disco records as a midway spectacle during a baseball doubleheader. House, and its Acid variant, gave the theory used that blasted and banned vinyl as its building blocks.

However, there's an "anti-disco" quality to the cuts featured on the collection. Probably thinking of their present single "Los Mirros Del Paraiso" (LSD2), Tyne notes European avant techno groups like Lesions D'angoisses as an influence. Moreover, while 70s disco carried on with a glitterball lushness, an inbuilt sense of poked, giddy danceability, these tracks have a spartan, open-skeletal feel to them, as if in belated tribute to their own mechanical workings. All that's here is some scaffolding—the crowds, the raves, the drugs, the Strangeloves, the moral panic that was all part of Acid would come later. There are trippy moments such as Siney D (Marshall Jefferson's) "The Lost Control," which sounds like a robot getting off on the simulated synthesizing pleasure of being unplugged, or the generally, oscillating tones of "Go Wild." But, generally, there's a Meccano austerity to this collection. Moreover, being unfamiliar or forgotten in the subsequent, popular melée of jackdramas and imitations, the likes of Mounon's "This Is Acid" feel as strange and pristine now as they did back then. Some tracks are a bit too austere, but they're swiftly supplanted by the likes of DJ Pierre and "Box Energy" and the cakewalk effect on your pleasure tastes of their groovey 80s soug. (B5)

With the surge of interest in Ro baile funk, Brazilian popular music has re-entered the spotlight. This is marked by two new compilations—overlapping by three tracks—of vintage Brazilian post-punk, **No Wave: Brazil Post-Punk 1982-88** (Mon Records CD) and **The Sexual Life Of The Savages** (Soul Jazz CD). *Soul Jazz* set comes attractively packaged with a thick booklet. Many of these recordings bring to mind the tight link of New York post-punk legends like Arto Lindsay, James Chance and David Byrne, who all owe serious debts to South American rhythms in their own

music. Expect many casual flashes of brilliance, like the São Paulo group Follie, who fused brittle samba and bossanova drum machine rhythms with loyish tones that recall early Italo-disco, or the tout-punk-disco of the conceptual group Alvo S. & As Garotas Que Enamam. Interestingly, many of these groups proudly wore the same "non-musical" badge as New York No Womers. Alvo S's lead singer was an architect. Follie were made up of journalists, while a poet was responsible for the dark, atmospheric sounds of Celvina Card and a music rising artist wrote the drums for the São Paulo group Chameo. Despite the abundance of good tunes, there are few live ephemera or other of these compilations. You're not likely to mistake the all-female group Meccanicas for The Slits, for instance, and Gang 90 weren't exactly Gang Of Four (G2).

Despite their total lack of commercial success, the seven albums produced by Greenwich Village's The Free Design are among the most ambitious and baroque vocal pop of the entire hip-hop era. Their flower-powered posturing may have made The Free Design sound like Selena Kili, but their complex melodic flows slowly became an unlikely (and very rare) taste for hip-hop producers, as well as an obsession for futurist-pop enthusiasts. **Free Design: The New Sound Redefined** (Light In The Attic CD) is a low-in for museum aficionados to tinker with Free Design songs in the remix booth, too often, however, comming these vocal harmonies between drum machine beats is like stuffing a lavish flower arrangement into the back of a car. Mostlo and Kid Kala has best of the hip-hop producers—the former was an avant-garde, avant-garde vocal reform as a decent excuse for some carnival rowdies, and Kala's set scratches affectionately quote the original without disrupting their flow. But only Caribou goes to the heart of the arrangements without disturbing their long shot, elegantly interweaving vocal harmonies adjacent a warm sampladic shimmer of sleigh bells, flutes and glockenspiel. (D4)

Maybe a generation of electronic musicians are getting bored, or they are trying to feel the rest of us as something. **Children's Music For Adults Volume 2** (Dark Atmosphere CD) and **Children's Music** (Starlight CD) both tattle out phrases of children's music for parents who genuinely care what their babies' ears might be subjected to, while listening themselves without grinning. The burbling raspberry-bubble noise of Flanbulb Orchestra's "Mike Bubble Song" sets the tone for the Starlight CD. The intact originals range from the jokery of Hisselcoore's "Lucky Baby Win Press" to the sublime stargazing delirium of Lawrence's "Telling Down A Dam Of Mashed Potatoes" with further attention spent delving nuggets from Maher Shalal Hash Baz, Don Ambarch, Karne/Thomas Kallied and Devernia Berhart, among others. The CD seems

reproduces a discussion between producer Eshward Elkes, artist Michael Kozlowski and musician Hakan "Seck-Beig" regarding the way early music learning can address today's electronically bombarded media-saturated young. Meanwhile, as its title suggests, the original children's music on the compilation put out by San Francisco "art nerd" label Duff Alliance is, perhaps, aimed squarely at the more sophisticated ears listening alongside their untamed offspring. As such, the rather cerebral music, by the likes of Control, Gonsky, Open City and Tono, is less immediately accessible and more rocky, angular and dissonant than anything encountered on Elkes's album. But then, who is to say what a child is capable of appreciating? (S2)

It's all from Florian Zimmer and Thomas Lebeod, whose activities in the German underground extend beyond music into writing for radio plays, sound installations, etc. Typically when they asked various friends and associates to work tracks from their 2003 album, *How/There*, they were looking for more than the usual bling of each other's sonic laundry. And so, **How/There Played By Hausmusik** can't really be described as a remix album at all, as the invited artists have written what amounts to entirely new material prompted by the original tracks, resulting in barely an ounce of fat or indulgence on this collection. The opener, Calexico's "Stoppages Eat Meat", is among the highlights—typically, this group who work in extremely parched terrain hundreds of miles south of L.A. took this album's original work, fitted it like a snail, and laid it skin out to dry. Similarly, Peter Thum's "Los Tama Avancé Camaró" does house D.A. Nait/Oliverio's "Carnes" is firmly Spaghet Western-like, all tumblered and squeaky doses on abandoned beats, before its sky runs a magisterial purple. Soles disorients "Zwei Engel Kampfer" to create a new rhythmic lotion through which to view the track anew, while the liquid metal movements of Christof Karmann's "Stoppages Pour Adeline" feature trumpeter Axel Dornier in both conventional and external roles. (S3)

**Victor Volume 3** (3 Arts For Art CD) = DVD), a compilation of performances from New York's annual Vision Festival, features many artists who play there regularly. As usual, double bassist William Parker takes a major role in the proceedings. He not only fronts the large-scale Jeanne Lee Project, he also a member of Rob Brown's Resonance, Matthew Shipp Quartet and Roy Campbell/Joel Myhrman Quartet, as well as this led by drummer Andrew Cyrille and kornings player Jin An Kim.

When Parker does it's always musical and well worth listening, though some of these ensembles grind through their material without producing much of interest. One of the problems that

beats free jazz is that, despite strident claims to the contrary, it's conceptually narrow and its expressive range is limited. The freedom it seeks can amount to nothing more than the freedom to repeat itself endlessly. Only the most inspired and original players, in both their thinking and musicianship, overcome such limitations. The best performances here, by Fred Anderson & Horner Binkhead, Patricia Nicholson's Palco, Joanne Lee Project, Resonance and Jin An Kim, certainly do that. Although many of the interviewees appear on both the CD and the DVD, their pieces aren't duplicated (though, on occasion, different excerpts have been taken from lengthy performances).

The DVD also contains brief interviews with several key players, as well as with the visual artists and dancers whose contributions to the Vision Festival receive scant mention in the wider world. Unfortunately, two of the filmed interviews couldn't be accessed. The filming and editing of the DVD material is rudimentary, but it captures rather well the improvisatory nature of the festival. (B4)

**Sleeping In The Market: Ethiopian Music & Sounds From Amhara** (Latitude CD) documents the return of an Ethiopian Jew, expatriated to Israel under the auspices of Operation Moses in the early 80s, to his native soil. The living legend in hand, Yehime Simen witnessed and preserved a different version of music as a component of daily life in the Ethiopian state of Amhara. In the tradition of the best ethnomusicology, *Sleeping In the Market* spans tongue and entertainment, drawing listeners into urban street scenes, village life and the world of children living on coastal islands. There are wonderfully detailed recordings: the arabesques of a blind fiddler reverberate off concrete surfaces on the streets of Gondar, other children and insects are heard behind the performance of the title cut as the sat sets on Debra Mayan Island, and the whirling ornaments of "Endaw Mele Mele", dominated by voice and harmonium, are barely contained by the walls of a tahouse in Adisa Akaba. During his sonic pilgrimage, Yehime Simen recorded a world much different from that depicted in the reissued pop of Buyle's Ethiopians series, though its sounds are every bit as galvanizing.

The Latitude label is clearly interested in ethnomusicology with its use added, indigenous sounds preserved with their subtle story told. With only a few releases to its name, the label joins the perfectly named Sublime Frequencies in the very small club of contemporary World Music labels whose output reflects the same love of the unknown and the drama implicit in seeking out the planet's original music. (RH) Reviewed by Gavin Dayal, Susana Glaser, Richard Henderson, Brian Marley, David Stubbs and Derek Whately

reveals a degree of warmth in contrast to the Sturm und Drang of some of his continental peers. That initial impression also bears a lightness of touch: The outer cover of Benford's new album is also pleasingly at variance with electronics's generally graphic frobes and features what appears to be a surprisingly captured image of a middle-class family relaxing on the sofa. Judging by their attire and the silhouette of those on an air-dried sofa, these people are English (add to this the virtue of some of the titles ["An Gentle", "Isess? Mep?"] and there's the suggestion of an agenda of some sort at work here.

The mid-paced electronics tinged with that gentle lefthand, however, avoids any direct association with the implied subject matter — no samples of arcade jingles or blare of transistor radios to be heard. Further listening prompts questions: Is the white noise of the percussion sampled from the wash of the sea? Can the grittiness of those grooves be associated with the feeling of sand caught between the toes (if not between the keys of a laptop keyboard)? More generally is there a sense of contemporary Englishness about the music and could this be an abstract commentary upon the mores of Benford's compatriots' holidaying habits?

It's ultimately impossible to ascertain, but the interaction between music, word and text is entertaining enough and one more argument for the importance of visuals in the face of unmythical digital downloads. While not necessarily moving for mandatory listening, it out-eth's a subtly distinctive voice whose acquaintance you're recommended to make.

# THE SKATERS SHADOW PSEUDO-ARCANIA CD-R BY JON DALE

The American duo of James Ferraro and Spencer Clark, operating as The Skaters, are borderline reclusive. Gambolling in *Opia's Shadow* is essentially — almost in total title or detail, the disc cloaked in muddy, blurring artwork, with wide stretches of black on the insert. Their music is just as shadowed: Using cracked electronics, primitive effects pedals and a thick sheath of minimalist distortion, The Skaters capture quirky, warped loops, subject them to the stresses of sonic overload and spill them out in lurching structures that are as urgent as the chants of a wayward auto-dictator.

The duo rely on the voice as source material, with Ferraro and Clark vocalizing language and syntax from guttural utterances, freeing themselves from the restraints of text and playing with the unformed song of the surrealist. When they do use other sources — the tentative ring of glaucously plucked strings, or the chattering bells and dull percussive thumps that repeat throughout "Justice Paraded Lips" — they are strictly auxiliary. The Skaters like their music: With skin and heat, inducing the imagined sound of singed hair and twisted, knotted veins and wires — you can picture the duo kicking the batteries that power their primitive effects units to further charge their ecstatic thoughts. These riffs are few and far between, as much as an untrained student of electronics and fleshy tissue, two voiceboxes lead through murky analogues systems.

# SMITH/QUINTUS/QUINTUS/ TADIC/NAUSEEF SNAKISH LED CD BY ANDY HAMILTON

From *Ne Males* to Stockholm — this striking release shows the range of trumpet master Rodolfo Leo Smith's activities and the confluence of some US indie hip-hop with elements of the European classical avant-garde. The link between group members seems to be the CaViTa Institute, where Smith is on the faculty and the others have some association. Gustaf Metzlar Tadic — here on classical and baritone guitars — and percussionist Mark Nauseef are established partners. The American born drummer has performing credits running from Rahim Abo-Khalil to Joachim Kühn to Lou HAMMON, and he's out several albums on the GMP label engineered by Walter Quintus. As its recording engineer, Quintus is best known. Here, however, he's presented as computer and processing, producing postmodern Ambient soundscapes and gliding electronic noise, with partner Katya Quintus infusing lyrics in German and English. With Tadic's spare strummings and Nauseef's haunting bell sounds, it adds up to an unusual if rather desolate backdrop to the traveler's consistently compelling Miles-Delved-inspired improvisations. The album is made up of a collection of short pieces (only one more than five minutes) of similar mood, or at least which seem to follow from one another quite seamlessly. Despite its melancholia, this is an eventful and enjoyable disc — Quintus-sential if maybe not essential.

# SYNAPSE RAW TZADIK CD BY CLIVE BELL

Synapse are a Japanese avant supergroup: After Dinner vocalist Haseo teamed with drum machine virtuoso Kait Mor, the magician of the cassette player Aki Onoda and Ground Zero guitarist Kazuo Imai. Individually these are all remarkable musicians. So why is their debut recording so unsatisfactory? Because it sounds assembled rather than played, stitched together by busy people, too much in demand to sit in the same room for the time it takes to make a record? Or because Haseo took the New York-recorded tapes back to Osaka for a final mix, resulting in her vocals sitting half a mile toward the rest of the group, reducing the music to meandering background?

The prospect of Haseo's crisp, chilly drum machines engaging with Onoda's impressionistic waves of cassette-based field recordings is an appalling one. And on "Mirror Room" his tapes start to work their magic; the skeleton of a song floats into view and all is well. Sadly on the other ten tracks the music has less personality. Everyone seems to be contributing electronics to a pleasant enough Ambient soup, until Haseo's over-murky rhyme vocals arrive and dominate, turning it all into a post-faced experiment in generating pointless pop songs.

We can talk about maverick experiment and pop but too often get half-compromised, resulting either in stringless and/or decent, songs. Since the Haseo albums with Sachiko Mi, Haseo seems to be struggling to find a context for her wayward vocal talents. Asking someone else

to produce would be a first step, here her voice is stranded on the beach while the musical tide heads for the horizon.

# RYAN TEAGUE PSEUDOPROES TYPE CD BY COLIN BUTLER

With *Sex Pseudos*, a Cambridge-based Ryan Teague explores the potential for marriage between crackly electronics and esoteric instrumentation. It's an area ripe for development, though one that's by no means virginial; given Muro's previous visits on 2002's *Martex* and its partial successor, *Ulysses*. Teague's sonic palette is more varied, however, and he clearly feels less constrained to add beats at every turn — only a minority of the *sex pseudos* succumb to a regular percussive rhythm. His writing for strings is also richer and less predictable, with the result that this music is not easy to tie away as 'beats plus strings' or other, similarly dismissive descriptions.

The string section of "Prelude II" bears the sort of melancholy gravitas lost hard to such expressive effect on *Asa-Chang* and *Jumpha's Kase*. The initially confident impulse of the volume is walled by electronic treatments and gradually mutates as a woman's voice sings wordlessly in the distance. Later, the mechanical percussion of "Prelude III" recalls Victor Gram's sinistral creations while strings pulse like Steve Rodia's Desert Music. Combined with the crackle and dust of contemporary glitziness and a short-lived pre-processor beat towards the end, the hybrid becomes more than the sum of its parts. Teague exercises an admirable degree of restraint throughout. He avoids overburdening his music while allowing it to negotiate transitions and foreground activity in a way that consistently engages the attention. Some of these pieces succeed in achieving a notable degree of beauty, but when surveyed as a whole they feel just a little tight. They are, after all, a collection of preludes. Their promise, however, makes me impatient to hear how Teague is going to expand upon these ideas.

# TICKLEH HERE ARE YOUR NEW INSTRUCTIONS TEXTILE CD BY DAN WARBURTON

Though Tickleh has been around for a decade, *Here Are Your New Instructions* is only the group's third release, following a self-titled debut album in 2000 and a limited edition split 12" with Floutron on Indigo shortly after. The game manifesto on the *Post-Millennium* describes the London-based trio — Phil Dumont and Kay Hopper plus Rob Flint as live video — as "a spectral presence on the British electronic music scene". Their presumably specific as in ghostly rather than musique spectrale, though the music they make does manage to reference almost every significant development in the brief history of electronic music with the exception of plunderphonics — no easy laughs to boot recognized TV themes — and grooves to boot. Though Dumont gained several groundbreaking improv albums as a vocalist, notably in the trio with Johns Batcher and Russell, before opting for reductionism (it was Dumont who adopted the term), appearing on two exceedingly sparse but hugely influential releases with Radio Mafia! and

Thomas Lehn, Benninghaus and Gach, it was his ongoing interest in Techno that attracted Hopper, formerly based with 1980s rockers Stamp. Curiously an early Simon Reynolds record of Stamp's Quirk Out as music "that hitches, shudders, flirts, dabbles, fidgets, belches" is a rather apt description of Tickleh. Too madly ironic for a label like Esoteric, too endemically human for Batcher-Norton, the *Itch* label jumps and giggles of "Sissy Stamp" are closer to the merged grimaces of Alpha Two, while the loop-sque synth patches of "Valentino Wedding" are distant cousins of leftfield 80s synthpop. The enhanced CD also features three short *QuikTime* films of Tickleh video work, while playful primary colour squiggles and shifting horizontal and verticals complement the music to perfection.

# DWIGHT TRIBLE & THE LIFE FORCE TRIO THE ANSWER MINIM TUNE CD BY GOREK WAINSWLEY

Dwight Trible is a jazz institution, albeit a little-known one. A soulful force vocalized in the title of the late Leon Thomas, he is vocal director for the Horace Tapscott Trio African Peoples' Orchestra and, like Thomas, he has worked extensively with Pharoah Sanders. The Life Force Trio project is the brainchild of Carlos Leon of Armoncoraat, an attempt to join the cosmic energies of meditative jazz and the physical realism of dance music — something Sanders himself tried, with somewhat limited results on disc-as-afairs such as *Johnny Be The One*.

Once the album was mastered, a host of eager producers stepped up to contribute, and with beats by Madlib, Daedelus and So-Ra alongside Nile himself, production certainly sounds fresh. Trible's vocal combinations are in contrast to other out of time — therefore stasis adding "love is the answer", suggesting we "save the children", abound. For the impatient modern person, *Love Is The Answer* can seem bizarrely devoid of content, a waste of our precious attention. But Trible is a master of the subtle. *The Answer* can begin to stir the soul. Subtlety's soulful House may not sound promising, but the legions of producers at work here add a sublime, oceanic depth to the music. Vocals and strings are doused in phase and distortion, like Lee Perry dabbling with disco on a long lost tape "Quispos" — day chains together synths from Kool & The Gang's "Summer Madness", as cool and refreshing as a water blast from a fire hydrant.

Singing wordlessly upon Madlib's "Wave Of Infinitesimal Harmony", Trible even seems to sound confused and unsure of his lyrics. He might not be saying anything particularly new or lively, but the depth of sound and feeling on *Love Is The Answer* should convert many non-believers.

# VARIOUS DOCTOR WHO AT THE BBC RADIOPHONIC WORKSHOP VOLUME ONE: THE EARLY YEARS 1963-1969 MUTE CD

# VOLUME TWO: NEW BEGINNINGS 1970-1980 MUTE CD

BY KEN HOLLINGS

Electronic music has always existed as a series of intersections with other forms of media,

# The Boomerang

—New reissues: rated on the rebound

Smokehouse: Jackie-O Motherfucker's Tom Greenwood



Two reissues by **Jackie-O Motherfucker** show how much the group progressed over a short period: their 2000, *Pigs 5 (AP) CD* presents their avant primitiv at its most avant and most primitive. Oddly enough, for a group who squint back at a sort of rootlessness, here they also play music to a high level of group-rand improvisation. The pieces take shape with no undue hurry, and Jackie-O also have a soul take on the swiftness rule of live improvisation — that someone's offering a rhythm or a piano makes it no longer live. In Jackie-O's case, if one member starts playing something in a strict time, sometimes the others start referring to the rhythm, elsewhere they all play across it or ignore it completely. It's sloppy and unkind at times but utterly original, and the force that holds it together is quite remarkably strong. The only weaknesses are the occasional lyrical campfire singing, like "Northern Line" and, at 24 minutes, "African Avenue Social Club" definitely outgrow its welcome.

From 2001, *Libertine (AP) CD* is a more satisfying release than its predecessor. Here the group's extraordinary facility with large-scale improvisations is at its most impressive, soaring up into more rhythmic and transcendental regions to invite companions with groups as diverse as No Nook Blues Band, AMM, Pink Floyd (aka Umagumaga), even the first incarnation of Anohni Darr. But again their casually ego-less mix of drums, trained percussion, guitars, reeds and keyboards creates a group stamp. Jackie-O take care on circa 20 potential mantras scattered around Portland, New York City, and Baltimore, which makes the organic multi-layered and intra-group telepathy they produce on pieces like "Peace On Earth" even more remarkable. (AM3)

By 1967, the mind-expanded world of psychedelia had inflated the pop mainstream to such an extent that it was virtually mandatory to trot beat-jazz into the world-beat chart. Neil Harman scored with his glibbigkokoo scream of consciousness ballad "Windmills Of Your Mind," while both The Mow and Dick Black were singing in song of earthshaking the disintegrating of sensory perceptions, explicated while toping with "I Can Hear The Grass Grow" and "I Can Sing A Rainbow" respectively. Although **Silly Ray** had worked as a songwriter for the Decca subsidiary Decca — home to lullaby pop groups like The Moody Blues and Honeybus — his debut album, *Ray* (Electric CD), shows he was coming in on a different tack. On "Garden Song," he sings from the perspective of an organism actually pushing up through the surface of the soil — surely a quite compelling perspective. But these were not just far-out tropes; he was here to communicate, no matter how strange his choices

subject matter might sound. "Be Not So Fearful" carries a biblical weight, while "Down In The Bridge" refuses across like a Pinteresque drama. Ray refuses offers of refreshment and also declines to go upstairs to see his wife, who is apparently entertaining a number of admirers.

Musically, Ray reminds you that it doesn't take much deviation from songwriting modes to produce drama; more cryptic work leads to yield up its secrets more slowly. Considering this album was firmly rooted in a day with a 21¢ piece orchestra ready and waiting to play along with a surprised Ray (its arrangements made overnight by Mike Gibbs), it's remarkably coherent.

Released in 1971, Ray's second album, *Time Of The Last Persecution* (Electric CD), is truly apocalyptic. He'd been reading a secondhand copy of 19th century ministers' commentaries on the Book Of Revelations and the Book Of Daniel, and when four students were gassed down during a protest at Ohio University in 1970, he was galvanized into action. The centerpieces of this first album now took on a darker hue, with Ray delving ominous biblical warnings couched in his own peculiar terms. Now Satan is lurking in the garden shed ("Release Is In The Eye") and zoo lions burst out of their cages on "Till The Chant Came Back," while Ray also urges us to hang onto our minds all the Messian returns. Although he wasn't a psychedelic musician, Ray exemplifies the consolidation many musicians underwent as they passed into the 70s. Here he utilizes a guitar, reed ensemble, including guitarist Ray Russell, who help give these extraordinary pieces their agency. (MB)

The *Body Lovers* was **Michael Gira**'s first significant post-Swans work, released originally in 1998 under the title *Number One Of Three*. It was followed in the same year by its counterpart, *The Body Riders*, a shorter work originally known as 34-13. These are now collected on a limited edition double CD, *The Body Lovers/The Body Riders* (Young God 2002). The *Body Lovers* is Gira and collaborators exploring an extended series of instrumental suites which go to make up a single, monumental piece. With its mixture of organic drones and acoustic textures processed together with found sounds, it retains Gira's sense of the enormous but channels it into a less confrontational musical approach. However, with his bold use of acoustic instruments, occasional peaks of howling noise and a pervasive sense of dread throughout, this hardly qualifies as Ambient. By way of contrast, *The Body Riders* is marked by its absence of conventional musical features, instead phoning in with relentless, low-level electronic noise, pervasive sounds and abstract eddies, building to a peak of unsettling sonic dissonance. Added to this release is a newly

recorded ten minute track which sounds like a cacophony of clocks before it plaves out into a long code of descending drone noise. Replaying and rewatching is roughly equal measure. The *Body Lovers/The Body Riders* now seems like a kind of palate-cleansing. (RX)

Common wisdom portrays **Vic Godard** as the nearly-was of punk, whose great early records as leader of Subway Sect all but disappeared due to bizarre managerial lack of acumen. Despite Anthology (Globe CD) tracing his strange history, the truly being and oblique sort of classics like "Amorion" and "Different Story" did feel like untapped possibilities for a different mop of punk. But Godard's recondite nature compelled him to turn to Northern soul, French Easy Listening, and moaner standards as templates. His series of singles from the 80s mastered a vision of pop music completely antithetical to the dominant New Pop discourse of the time. By 1985's "midday Hyp," he was set amid like-jazz brass and cocktail piano, trying to make a virtue of a voice spectacularly ill-suited to his musical taste. Somehow, these songs still work as great pop, though they can sit uncomfortably close to Style Council's cafe culture. By the end, Godard is working with Edwin Collins on a string of singles that consolidate all the moves he would make through his career, reaching a peak of sorts on the blue-eyed melancholy of "Won't Turn Back." That single was eerily released on the reissued Postcard label. Could there have been a better match for Godard's contrary streak and pop-soul-with-avantisms than Postcard's combative Alan Horne? (G)

The most drastic detail about Tuxedomoon bassist **Peter Principle**, is the almost total absence of basic guitar. Described as 13 "sonic sculptures" derived from his own dreams, it might best be compared with Hölger Czukay's Movies or John Cage's HPSCHD. Clearly branching off from that milieu of whirly and menace that marks Tuxedomoon, this is bristling with references. Clair de Lune, movie dialogue snippets, Ambient electronics, percussive mantras, the desert, mechanical repetition. Despite the dry, dry allusions to 20th century atonalism, even mutant beats, Principle is reported to have said that, in retrospect, Convergence might have been a little too long or busy. While Czukay grabbed pieces out of the air on shortwave radio or reeked stuff off Hollywood movies on TV, Principle's project constructs a vast collage of unaccountable styles and sources. That dizzying array of references might also be a weakness, rendering any sense of coherence meaningless, although that could still be dream fire, a jumble of tropes that echoed the composer's passages of rapid eye movement. (G)

In 1966, actor Cornell Wilde directed and

starred in *The Naked Prey*, a Hollywood studio film shot on game preserves throughout South Africa. Looking to imitate his remake of *The Most Dangerous Game* with anthropological rigor, Wilde eschewed conventional notions of film music and opted instead to utilize songs and drumming of the various agrarian peoples — collectively known as the Bantu — on whose land he was filming. Hence **Wudu Musicians** are credited with responsibility for *The Naked Prey*. Original soundtrack (Latitude CD) High theory has documented Kufu music nearly a decade prior to Wilde's on-location experiences, the 1950s recordings of Xhosa, Zulu and Swazi music made in the 1950s recently saw issue on the Sharp World label, their music much resembling the songs and dances commemorating aspects of life that underscored *The Naked Prey*.

Music is a threatening element within Wilde's film. The protagonist, portrayed by its director, is pursued by African warriors, their drums beating his every step. Nothing about the soundtrack, however, argues this menace. This is an unadorned record of music in the life of tribal society immediately prior to encroachments by mass media. That one of the vocalists was also an actor may denote change already in the offing. *The Naked Prey* existed in the same era as South African stage productions based on tribal music and mores, such as *King Kong* (the latter introducing the voice of a young Mkhosi Mkhosi to international audiences). Still, these songs celebrating country and drinking and the onset of puberty are vibrant and of an entirely sanguine cast. A very short line may be drawn between the Wudu's choral voices and the most appealing qualities of mbube, the South African a cappella singing popularized in the 80s by Ladysmith Mambazo.

Curiously, the soundtrack recordings for *The Naked Prey* are still available as downloads from the Smithsonian Folkways Website (smithsonianfolkways.org) along with official Folkways LP sleeve imagery and notes. Moses Ash, Folkways founder and producer, packaged the record with sparse, nonorchestral imagery, much as he would use of the ethnographic releases on the label. The Latitude edition is altogether more alluring. The booklet's sports key art from *The Naked Prey*'s advertising campaign, a link to Erik Davis's astute skewer assessing the film as "a classy Mando movie, a blend of ethno-ecological ecodis, exploitation and solid Hollywood fare." The Latitude CD benefits slightly from remastering, though its muted tone is indicative of tapes made by a film crew used to capturing dialogue on tape. Its sound makes the fact of a studio music score solely with field recordings all the more extraordinary. (RH) Reviewed by Mike Barnes, Jon Oak, John Gill, Richard Henderson and Tom Ridge

thereby rendering all notions of its inherent purity academic in just about every sense of the word. The relationship between the BBC Radiophonic Workshop and the children's daytime television series *Who* is a case in point. The two seemed to simultaneously enable and embarrass each other as their relationship developed to the extent that when the BBC Radiophonic Music album was released in 1968, featuring compositions by John Baker, David Case and Derek Derrythine, it was devoted not to include any material specifically recorded for the series. At the same time, the show's producers were still obligated to scabale around, pulling together library recordings from the likes of Roger Roger, Douglas Gillingham and Desmond Leslie, to help keep the action moody and, if popular urban myth is ever to be believed, their young viewers scowling in terror from behind the sofa. A primo electronic composition like the *Who* title theme, composed by Ron Grainer and realized by Derek Derrythine with assistance from Dick Mills, was not always covered by the show's budget.

The material produced by the Workshop for the show during its first six years bears all the marks of having been carefully dubbed, processed and assembled on tape using only household junk and primitive oscillators as sound sources. Cut together by hand, tacked like "Sensate Speech" and "Dalek Spacedust Land" from Volume One make up for passion of effect what they lack in dynamic range. The "Clinty" soundtracks from *Galaxy 5000* from an early 1960s storyline, could even be mistaken for outtakes from Varèse's *Poème Électronique*, a work which in itself had intersected with architecture and audiovisual design in its creation. The increased use of keyboards, in the form of the EMS VCS3 and the legendary Delaware synthesizer meant that the workshop could get more bang for its buck over the next decade or so, but the sound also lost some of its toughness and rigour; if the material included on Volume Two is anything to go by.

Composers Della Della's "Blue Wale And Golden Bear," a piece originally recorded for a BBC documentary on remote tribes of the Sahara that wound up in a 1970 *Who* episode, with some of the tracks created on the *Delaware* for the *Sea Devils* series only a couple of years later. There's a sudden emphasis, a sense of having sounds and a range of effects to spare, but the resultant music looks both focus and intensity. When it comes to the registering and tempering of sound, the keyboard can give with one hand while taking away with the other. Just try and imagine children covering their ears at the Workshop's attempt to rerecord the *Who* theme on the *Delaware* in 1972 and you'll appreciate what kind of tangles and effects are involved in the use of electronic keyboards. Not surprisingly, this version was quickly dropped from the series after only a couple of airings.

#### VARIOUS MAMA KANGAROOS: FIFTY WOMEN SING BEEHIVEART GENIUS CD

BY MIKE DUMMINGS

Captain Beehiveart suggested on a number of occasions that he really wrote his music for women. This was partly because he meant it, but

also because he was pinched about it only appearing on radio. Explicitly the sort who, as Bill "Zoot from Riko" Markeland mentioned in his book *Lunar Motel*, would turn up to shows dressed as computers in homemade cardboard costumes. Of course, some women do like Beehiveart but evidence suggests that his forbearance is still more the preserve of the male of the species.

Perhaps not so much in Philadelphia. This 20-track compilation features women artists exclusively from that town, the great majority of whom tackle Beehiveart's music imaginatively, assertively and in a way well deserving of our attention. Maybe the main was right after all. Many musicians have encountered problems covering Beehiveart's music. Most haven't got the time or chops to play his more difficult compositions and many don't seem to know what to do with the songs. Margaret's like "The cover of 'Love You, You Big Dummy' and The Members' would take on 'The Cream For Crows' were other lessons in how not to do — a rock odelette that is as unlike the original in every way that it only really makes sense as a farce by association exercise. But once past the odd but considerable pleasure gained from listening to women plundering the Beehiveart canon, what impresses most is the way they identify and tease out the structural threads that made many of Beehiveart's songs great in the first place. Then, more often than not, they do something original with them.

Beehiveart was as aware as the disco/rock 4/4 beat that had become ubiquitous in the post-punk era he used to dismiss it as "that main heartbeat, the beat that makes the money." God knows, that, what he would make of Global Technologies' techno/breakbeat-driven take on "Wish Doctor Ute." It actually works as a treat, as does *Waves Of Africa's* wonderful version of "Alba Zebra," which sounds like a Latin percussion ensemble backing the Manzanera Queens. "Party Of Special Things To Do" (one of Beehiveart's best songs, but also Mowah's blavie, blavie cover easily eclipses the original).

Kiss Kiss Kill takes the theme "Lick My Decals Off, Baby," whereas the original is humorous and whimsically sexual, their version is sexy and humorous in the great liberties they have taken with the form. Just in case it starts to sound easy, Teminibus demonstrate another problem — that Beehiveart was often quite sketchy on melody (on their version of "When I See Mommy I Feel Like A Mummy," they play it fine — a little elongated — but the singer has her work cut out trying to fashion a tune out of what was basically a series of exclamations).

#### VARIOUS QIBCO U-NITE NEW YORK I QIBCO CD

BY MICHAEL

#### VARIOUS QIBCO U-NITE BRUXELLES II QIBCO CD

BY ALAN GUMMINGS

With releases by outsider heroes like Suburban Band Off The Main, Makoto Kawahara and Arthur Doyle (none is best, better any-only label Qibco clearly has preferences to record a 21st century successor to such legendary underground imprints as ESR, Shredder, Saturn or Futura. But where those

labels were instantly recognisable for a relatively spartan visual aesthetic, Qibco releases are more usually marked by sloped production values, cack-handed lettering and quietly coloured vinyl. The current releases are no exception, boasting full colour gatefold covers adorned with deep sea fish and assorted animals. Thankfully the music, recorded live in March and April 2004 in New York and Brussels, goes some way towards making up for the ironic packaging.

The New York disc first showcases a ditch of the city's free blowing postmodernism to profane, if not entirely mindboggling effect. After an opening, beautifully tangled piece of vintage Beat verse by Steve Dalachinsky, Charles Waters and Andrew Barker start tentatively with Barker's stabbing percussive jobs failing to ease much response from Waters's muted, introspective clematis and slightly more fiery alto. The duo expand with the addition of multi-necked Daniel Carter, clarinetist Perry Robinson and Shanti Eon Blumenthal on bass. Carter takes the bar considerably less abraded tone on trumpet and trumpling an embossed tonal lodestone and direct clarity for the music. The second disc is more interesting, providing a series of groupings for solo-first-tenor and vocals of Albusheim's Arthur Doyle. The numbing eccentricity of his phrasing and the still astonishing stop and huff of his tenor are not easy veins to accommodate, but the collection of underground rock/hip-hop heads who make up his Electro-Acoustic Ensemble are on expanded form, cooking up a swirling vortex of buzzing and falling LARMS moves that jibe perfectly.

The Bruxelles disc explores the creative blend of free jazz into European dance-rock improv. It is sequenced perfectly, flowing like a single motion dream from a bass solo by Alan Silva, through a duo piece by James Luchini Luchini, and into a set by UK's three eye mantras Visceralized Orchestra that expands to feature the Fins and Americans Chico Cosano and Paul Fahrens. Silva's take is a masterpiece of sensation and control, his bowing and the natural resonance of wood and steel seeming to float in a pool of sublime concentration. But the Visceralized set, taking up the same ideas of vinyl, is the real highlight — a fully immersive, subliminally suggestive symphony of ebbing drums, seeped bass patterns and patterning percussion that lulls even the usually explosive Cosano and Fahrens into its narcotic dreamstate.

#### CRISTIAN VOGEL STATION 55 NONAMULTI CD

BY BOB YOUNG

Cristian Vogel has spent a decade and a half at Techno's beckon. As the founder of the No Future/Envision network in Brighton, and now living in Barcelona, the onetime 20th century music student is one of the most proactive DJs, musicians, producers and composers on the global electronic net (indeed, he's one of the very few surviving artists who still make that term make sense).

Station 55, his ninth album, is vintage Vogel, with a wider palette than 2000's *Rescue 337*. It features musicians from Barcelona group Vicio, plus Madrid's Burbage and Max Tinner (Metastasis/Puppetmaster), as well as guest

slots for Kewin Bieddom (bellowing through a digital harmoniser on "1908, Heles") and Young God Franz Treischer. His hour-long tour ensures plenty of light and oxygen enters the sound pool. "Heaven Underground" is drum programming as a murmur as the Womers' Ziggy Modiste from the eastward sign that gave Rescue 137 is the, to present today like "Somewhere In The News, We Will Find You," the six most recent for me in Vogel's music, or at least the visual rhythms and neon desecration of a 21st century port city like Barcelona. Rhythmic tracks ("On The Line") crackle out of tiny crystal radio sets, while "Lowlights" is sprinkled with acoustic guitar. Bass is dropped not as a line, but as a rippling wave of sludged noise; conventional melody is replaced by rippling sounds like thin layers of torn metal foil. He's skilled at musically describing the sensation of panic held in check, and only really fails to Aufheben for the way he re-illuminates the system and the sound, never permitting a lazy loop to run untroubled.

#### KEITH FULLERTON WHITMAN MULTIPLES NONAMULTI CD

BY NICK SOUTHAMPTON

In *Idiot*, the recent film documentary about his sound show machine, Robert Moya Jarama, wisely perhaps, that although designed for experimental artists, the synthesizer was first adopted to make sound effects for TV commercials and Hollywood films. We know this because when an instrument costs the same as a small house, people will need to turn a back with it. Only scholars funded by the depths of oceans of copyrights and bequests stood apart from these cross realities, however innocent the cost of their freedom might be.

It is fitting then that *Multiples* was recorded by Keith Fullerton Whitman during a stay lecturing at Harvard University. This allowed him access to a veritable knot of tattered *Idiot*'s core of vintage gear. The combination of Whitman's wit and love of all things synth with this bounty of equipment is a back-to-basics electronic masterpiece.

In mock academic tribute to the academic tradition, each piece is simply and functionally named by the equipment used to make it. "Stereo Music For Hi-Hat" is a low, slow, going down track that segues into "Stereo Music For Serge Modular Prototype — Part One," which opens with long swooping synth bubbles before boiling and bringing into the neon haze squiggles and pangs of the eternal synth cooking pot. "Stereo Music For Serge Modular Prototype — Part One" finds similar textures before it is "Circled" from beneath by a fat bulging syno-pod pounding skin to any John Carpenter soundtrack.

Parts one and two of "Stereo Music For Acoustic Guitar: Bubble Music Box 100, Hewlett Packard Model 236 Oscillator, Electric Guitar And Computer" are closer to Whitman's previous recordings. However, with the droning unresolved cycles of "Stereo Music For Yamaha Delcivator Prototype, Electric Guitar And Computer," he most impresses. This is the soundtrack for the exquisite reflections of the last survivor, turning over in the wreckage of the world, the distant tangle of a nebula to see things that have never known before and now cannot be shared. □

# Avant Rock

Reviewed by Edwin Pouncey

## BLACK MOUNTAIN BLACK MOUNTAIN

Stephen McKeen's Vancouver-based commune/group Black Mountain incorporate the techniques of such acts as The Rolling Stones and The Velvet Underground as well as later eclectics like The Postal Service and Royal Trux. This is especially evident here on "No Static Dead," where the rebellious pulsing energy of The Stones' song is completely reversed and pushed out with a brand new engine humming under its black head. Further customized with folky riffs and a "Waiting For My Man" backbeat, the song is a seductive smooch that slowly leads its way into your brain. Equally wry thing is "Get Us Free," which summons up the spirit of David Byrne's "I Only Got One" and Remember My Name and faces it with what sounds like a mutated outtake of Neil Young's "Cortez The Killer".

## ELIZABETH ANKA VJAGIC NOSTALGIA/PAIN EP CONSTITUTION CD

Accompanied by musicians from Godspeed 'n' Black Emperor, A Silver Mount, Zinn, Mosses, Shalebi Eger and the mighty Vajic, Montreal-based singer/guitarist Elizabeth Anka Vajic's second release is her 2004 debut album *Stand With The Silence Of This Day* is an equally effective and chilling sonic experience. Whispering through the bleak, strung down organ — a funeral dirge complete with padded drum beats and shakily strummed acoustic guitar — Vajic's vocal swoops in low over a blizzard of electronics, crackling strings and broken musical box melodies. Beautifully realised and packaged, *Nostalgia/Pain* describes the mood of Vajic's Gothic quest perfectly.

## FAMILY UNDERGROUND ANCIENT SHADOWS CRONO LP

The latest offering from Malak art label Qbico is this beautifully simple black and white picture disc from Danish Improv drone orchestra Family Underground. A companion piece to Double Legends' *Urban Conscious* picture disc, also on Qbico, *Ancient Shadows* is equally thrilling and addictive, softly leading us into a pit of undulating drone, electric guitar riffs, rasped percussion and phantasm vocalizing. Family Underground creates a whirling wall of sound, continually pulled down and rebuilt as their improvisations become more confident and detailed. Threaded through with feedback interludes, guitars furiously grind away or scissile around like mice in an attic as the all-powerful drone anchors the swaying composition, keeping it from drifting off into deep space.

## FOG 10TH AVENUE FREAKOUT LEX CD

Originally a low budget solo project by Minneapolis punk rocker/happier and

beatmaker taper Andrew Bider, Fog have since developed into a group teetering on the precipice of greatness. On the heels of such impressive records as *Star Beach* and the *Hummer EP* Fog intend a their most accomplished yet, with Bider's jaggedly small riffs swirling in between glacial blasts of rock percussion and glitchy arpeggio electronics — all of which threaten to shut the whole thing down before, miraculously, somebody finds the fusebox and the light of inspiration burns brightly once more. Imagine *ALUDD* jamming with Wilco, with David Lind producing, and you're only halfway there.

## MONOSOF SWIRNOFF SEVEN RECORDED WORKS ECURSE LP

**MONOSOF SWIRNOFF  
TWO RECORDED WORKS  
ECURSE LP**

These two volumes of strange, spectral improvisation from Californian duo Ilye Monosof and Preston Swirnoff are almost gleefully obscure. Apart from track titles, timings and recording dates, they're bereft of any further information or visual reference that would give the listener a clue as to just what is going on here. Seven Recorded Works nods in the direction of AMM, with Monosof's hurdy-gurdy and harmonica meandering reactively over Swirnoff's gloomy organ drone and Sate-like piano embellishments.

By contrast, *Two Recorded Works* features electric guitar and organ, with unrelenting riffs bursting through the rock riffing on the second side, which could easily be mistaken for some long lost Psychedelic Speed Rock session from Nappy Ashby's High Rise power trio. Further along, on "Outtakes," some hangover infused Underground guitar side is spewed over an electric organ sound that brawls swerves from No Wave minimalist stab to almost high-church pomp without taking a breath.

## MY CAT IS AN ALIEN/ CHRISTINA CARTER FROM THE EARTH TO THE SPHERES GRACE LP

## MY CAT IS AN ALIEN WHEN THE WINDMILL'S WHIRL DIES ECURSE 2XLP

The creative concept behind the Diplo brothers' ongoing *From The Earth To The Spheres* series of dual recordings featuring great artists is somewhat reminiscent of the ESP-Disk mantra, which claimed, "The artist alone decides what you will hear." Christina Carter (of Charlamagne/Scenes fame) and Andrew (Bowie) MacGregor's contribution, "We Know When We Are Thinking About Each Other," is a pleasant and diffusive enough prelude, but there is nothing here the critical harmonising and listless guitar stracking that has not already surfaced on previous efforts. The effect is somewhat similar to listening to

the muted gasps of a pair of oversized ice-carp struggling for oxygen in a tiny fishbowl.

Carter & MacGregor's side does, however, provide the perfect build up to MacGregor's distinctly heavy "The Circle Of Life And Death", which lifts their interplanetary sound into another dimension, a storm of scodes that gradually escalates into a stunning chorus of luminous alien guitar thrills and angry electronic motor glugs. When The Windmill's Whirl Dies, which sounds like it was recorded in the control room of some outdated power station, is alive with buzz, here and whirled throat (together with an opening spoken sequence from Roberto, which sets the tone for the entire record), and is a further example of the nature of this disc.

## THE PUNKS THANK YOU FOR THE ALTERNATIVE ROCK 5 RUE CHRISTINE CD

Made up of team members Slim Moon, Benny Pizz, Marianne Kozlovski-Dresner, Marissa Pank and John Chavez, The Punks (from Olympia, Washington) have much more to offer than the expected anarcho-punk and now that their name beamingly suggests this, it is an oddball mix of snappy voice samples, retarded drum beats and queasy organ and valve renditions, which have been gathered from variously located recording sessions. Thank You For The Alternative Rock is a glorious, sprawling mess, with a fiercely lit mentality coursing through the songs, which range from half formed experimental pieces to Ambient detritus. In between, there are some highlights, including a vocal harmony piece akin to Smile-era Beach Boys jamming with Phil Spector. Thanks a lot, Punks.

## SUN CITY GIRLS FOLK SONGS OF THE RICH AND EVIL/EXOTICA ON \$5 A DAY ECURSE 2XLP

The fourth in the proposed double LP sets from Edipse chronicling San City Girls' mythical Clavien cassette recordings trends back to 1965 where outsider punk rock, improvisation and shamanism were ruthlessly smashed together. For Songs Of The Rich And Evil is a mood blast of lapidary musical ravings, complete with baring, half-sung mantras that contain warped elements of Tiny Tim, Al Jolson and Antonine Jimmy Senese. *Exotica De \$5 A Day* ploughs a more ethnic groove, with bells and percussion pounding rhythmically over the garbled vocal rantings. Recorded in unlikely locations, including a kitchen and a hallway, this latest batch of babble and shriek makes for uneasy but vital listening.

## TAR PET THE ARTIST REVEALED IS TARALE DAWN GALACTIC ZOO DISK/ECURSE LP

Here's some wide eyed and creepy cravily acid folk spinning from one Tarale Dawn, a member

of the Sperm that in The Sunset Rose collective, who have also released a record on Galactic Zoo Day/Eclipse. Dawn's solo venture, however, has been to undergo underground as a CD for several years, as she has been in vinyl in a welcome surprise for those who have been longing to hear her ecoplastic voice drifting around their room like a troubled ghost. Perforated with broken genre thinking, scraped strings and fairy tinkling (together with field recordings of water, birdsong and a dog barking), her Tar Pet songs wander restfully through the album, bagging at faded memories and producing sensitive and haunting atmospheres out of thin air. That said, the photo of a snike devouring a frog headfirst that graces the cover itself suggests the true artist/audience relationship here.

## TARAS BUL'BA INCISIONE WALLAGE CD

Originally formed in 1996 as an instrumental project, Italian trio Taras Bul'ba are a head-on extreme rock trio whose funniness bombardment shuffles somewhere between Big Black and Enslin/Enslin. Using the basic instrumentation of guitar, bass and drums, the group add found objects film soundtrack samples to their driving beats — looping their rhythms back and forth to push out an even more sinister sonic accompaniment to such crackling critical statements as "I could get my hands on you, I'd break your dyed teeth to pieces." There is also a progressive element to Taras Bul'ba's work which directs it away from being just another straight rock unit into the realms of contemporary classical or Naked City jacked jazzcore. Music for headbangers and even Black Metal worshippers, but possessed with an almost madman intelligence.

## ULYSSES HIGGONNA A BEARD GIRL JAPANESE CD

Japanese duo Ulysses are guitarist Jiri Tanaka and drummer Ryosuke Nagao, whose collective creative acid is clearly immersed in the pop punk gyrations of X Japan and the later Rait. Grit growling of Huggy Bear. While traces of both of these groups bubble to the surface on this short, snappy and mostly enjoyable selection, it is only when they put it out themselves up to improvisation that things really begin to get interesting. Both "Dancer [sic] In Other World" (with additional sitar saxophone from Jeremy Gannerman) and "Inner Space Trip" are loosely fitted explorations into the subconscious, where the hell-for-leather guitar stomp and ruptured drum barrage is traded in for a more poetic approach. The DNA-style No Wave clamour of the final track, however (apart with the addition of Gannerman), clashes both of Ulysses' musical elements together in a No Wave spasm of punk guitar and free jazz hysteria that, fully cranked up, could be distantly related to The Stooges' "LA Blues". □

# Critical Beats

Reviewed by Philip Sherburne

## ALEXANDER'S DARK BAND DOBUTSU BANCHO

CD NECTAR/CDC

I thought I could live the rest of my life without ever hearing another chunky, twisted, breakbeat, but I. Soul Kane proves me wrong. What makes Dobutsu Bancho so fresh is the air of lunacy hanging over it. Kane, aka Deft Klugger and Octagon Man, is a cartoonish, extraterrestrial, but instead of looking down every beat and echo, he's loosened the feedgates and stood back to watch everything eddy away in a rising tide of unhinged effects and psychedelic oscillations. Ample empty space gives rise to his jagged joins, but the album's overall effect is nonetheless of an overwhelming density. Vinyl buyers will be especially pleased with "Fanned Battle Weapon," four minutes of hanking and whimpering interspersed with rough-out breaks. CD listeners benefit from five additional tracks, including the hypnotic, bonging "Strange Man," from his vinyl-only 2000 LP *Lord Calves*.

## BLACK MARKET SABRES HIGH

CD SCD

Angie's breaks haven't been this chopped since dm's "Break Again" at Benihara. Morrison's Mike Martin doesn't so much go for the breakbeats as savage them: every bar brings a new configuration of head-nodding hi-hats and snare-tossed down the stairs. Dance music hasn't skewered repetitive beats this thoroughly since Autotech's *Art EP*. Even when mellowed by Detroit beats, Angie's nose and soul gives way again and again to an almost desperate sense of disjunction. The overall mood is as sinister as titles like "Frost" and "The Chills" would suggest. Judging by his stabbing motifs, "Skaters" is more likely meant for the knife than the shoe, for all the wall-banging portability, beaming high above the 7/4 time signature and ready to tumble with every staggered down beat.

## ALAN BRAXE & FRIENDS THE UPPER CUTS

PHS CD

Stanford's "Music Sounds Better With You" is one of the most overplayed House anthems of all time; it's also one of the greatest. One person's cheese is another's bio experiment. In the same way, Braxe's work can be seen not just as pop obnoxiousness pushed to the red line, but also as a kind of hyper-pop — social engineering carried out in sound. Everything in "Music" is designed to elicit a specific, entirely physical response: The cocaine guitar makes the hairs on the neck stand straight, the bass drops resonate in the stomach the same way a glacier's sudden descent might; and those insistent filters operate like a cocoon around one's self, like a translucent filter between you and the world. The rest of the album largely attempts to recreate the same experiment, until it comes to seem like a formula, but hey — dance music, like the scientific method, requires repetition. "Suzanne" nevertheless deserves accolades for its ridiculously emphatic drops, as Miami Vice sheen pushed into ecstatic overload.

## CAPTAIN COMETOSWE UP IN FLAMES

CD NECTAR/CDC

Khan and Smit's new album as Captain Cometoswe — a disco-rock ode to amyl nitrate — opens with an electric-hack send-up of the kind of extended Go-Gro vomp that The JB's used to herald their bassladder's arrival onstage. Above the screams and squalls, a wince-inducing further scene-setting, reeling off a laundry list of a few of the Captain's favorite things: "We like to travel, we like champagne... we like to have sex, we like to eat good, we like to do interviews, we like to go onstage, and we like the spotlight, we like the noise, we like the leather sofas, and we like our hotel rooms. We like the minibars, we like the burlesque." Shouldn't every album begin with the kind of full-on-dance-alienation? "To My Song," which follows, is a cousin to Supertramp's version of Eric's "Baby's On Fire," complete with patterned pianos noted from The Velvet Underground and the catchiest angling ever to appear on a Playhouse record. Elsewhere, Mems Day & The Time meet 24 Hour Party People, Khan indulges his blues rock fix, Schaffel licks up its spangly ankles, and electrofunk takes out to have been such an awful time after all.

## ENTERPLAY WATER & DUST

ARM CD

One hesitates to ask what the dust is in the title of this collaboration between Japan's DJ Kent and Switzerland's Rosiane and Leneq. Perhaps it's nothing stronger than instant coffee, but if the first half lopes along through funkified breakbeats and lipped conga action with a kind of airy liquid simplicity, the second arms up on propulsive 4/4 rhythms, surging arpeggios and an overall sense of transcendence. Small wonder that one of the most forceful tracks, plying a student series of repeated chords over rolling cowbells and a whorl-pick, is called "The Turning Point." But maybe the real change happens with "Fog," which despite its low key, half-speed pacing, allows the album to shift from competent beat collages into something far stronger. Those rolling hi-hats need to be heard to be believed, and phantasmal Rhodes keys tipping from mode to mode suggest sounds that aren't there at all.

## TIM EXILE HANZO STEEL CUTS EP

MC/SHOUT CD

Few drums 'n' bass artists have side projects in techno, but festering to Tim Exile's single for Cristian Vogel's Mesquita imprint, you wish that there would take a stab at the 4/4 form. Better known for his jungle rhythms for Moving Shadow and Planet Mu, Tim Exile (aka Exile) doesn't so much out his beats as sledgehammer them, leveling the pieces flat when they may the straightest track, "Inferno," lays overblown synth-line lines over a rambling drum pattern hybridizing Chicago House and breaks, and the rest of the tracks just get louder and uglier. "Dearflex" begins with a devious enough electro figure, but it soon inflames itself into an

enraged monster spitting fiery techstep beats and meadows of analogue delay it sounds a bit like an amalgam of Ponsoe and Sugden, a winning combination for noisies of all stripes.

## ALEXANDER ROBOTNICK CIUCCI KOLA REMIXES

CD NECTAR/CDC

A lighter touch than 1983, "Ciucci Kola" sounds not so much like the fizz of the beverage that may have inspired it, and more like the sticky residue dried in the bottom of a bottle left in the sun for days. Only a minute and a half long, the track's dusty machine rhythm and echoing refrain sound more like something Cabaret Voltaire might have come up with "I Remember Remikolai," only slightly longer, sets a bounding, proto-alo! baseline in counterpoint with a mournful synth-led line. It's far sadder than anything on the *Fuzz Dance EP* and with the exception of "Problems," more satisfying.

## ROR-SHAK A FOREST

CD NECTAR/CDC

You know that the 80s owe pop culture when even Old School Jungle 80s turns to the Case for Inspiration. On the first single from Ror-Shak, the duo of Brooklyn Science co-owner DB and Cango Industries' Salvia cover "I Forest," from 1980's *Seventeen Seasons*. The A side is remarkably bestial, with an uncredited vocalized growl from Robert Smith (sans yelps) and wah-wah guitars providing woo-woo-wooding textures that push the rhythm straight into dream 'n' bass cadences. The B side, though, is the better version, subterranean all but the basic vocal refrain and emphasizing the pristine beats of an overheating monotone. Funny that the tune, given its green-scape, moody, jungle patterns sound less like a product of broomstick science, and more like the most natural rhythm in the world.

## DJ RUPTURE REDUX

CD NECTAR/CDC

Celebrating its 15th anniversary, New York's Brooklyn Beats releases three tracks from Jace Clayton, aka DJ Rupture. His "Si-A Plomo Vives," featuring Puerto Rican rapper Welmo Romero, sees Rupture in top form, leaving Romero's Spanish language flow relatively untouched while he pieces together an underpinning of stand-up bass, strident breaks, jungle cadences and mournful, wailing Aesop strings. The discehall-influenced "Rumbo Bayforn" begins with a distorted, minimal rhythm searching not unlike a Leroy or Richard Brownie production and adds a schizophrenic array of vocal samples and jazz licks before heading into its double time outro. The B side is pure brutality — both Rupture's own "Desamirai," which sounds like a pause time of regga-jungle that's been left out in the sun (and ice) and for months, and French breakers gum-bum-bum through House and breaks. But the single's best track is a new one, "Skille Cell." Featuring uneasy cell vocals from Jerry Jones, it sounds not unlike Murco's minimal

Techno adaptations of Morton Feldman, except that its beat lurches erratically and its overall sound is as dirty as a near-encrusted bowl.

## DI T BOOGIE PLAYGROUND

CD NECTAR/CDC

Berlin's Got Physical label is something like the German equivalent to Mute and Area and their Enormous Impact. The debut album from DI T (aka Thomas Koch, publisher of Grove magazine) continues the label's fusion of disco and acid elements into a genre uncomfortably known as "Electro-House." *"Funk On You"* is a textbook study in the form, from its glossy hi-hats and apple-rip arpeggios to its slightly psychedelic effects, as digital delays ascend bubbling straight to the rooftop. (Give yourself, admittedly, as the obviousness of Parliament's "Let us lay some funk on you" sample, but perhaps that's part of the label's modus operandi — they seem more interested in populist awe-shaking than obscuringist testosterone.) Full of hollow basslines, miscellaneous arpeggios, and minimal vocal samples, and shrouded in a seductive scum of delay, Boogie Playground succeeds in turning out infectious funk, but something feels missing. One begins to long for the unpredictability, the risk, the madness that distinguishes related offerings from Inside or the Jam Madeus. Those are powerhouse tracks but Boogie Playground could use some cracked pavement and pebbles.

## VARIOUS SLAM DUNK PRESENTS FUNK CARIOCA MIXED BY TETINE

CD NECTAR/CDC

At Miami's M3 conference in March, the London-based Slam Dunk trio performed a rare mix of the best cuts from its all-afrocan pop party, but the people in front of the stage seemed more intent upon finishing their volleyball game — an inauspicious North American debut for Rio's hottest pop music firm, but a lesson in the ease of translating such a contextually dependent form to new territories. The local variant of ghetto Tech and Miami Bass, funk carioca (or "bafé funk") has been bubbling under the Anglo-American radar for a few years, but has come to the idol throne to the patronage of DeLo and MIA, who have both incorporated funk into their own music, and last year's appearance of the Bafé Funk, Favela Rôdy Beats or Germany's Easy Beat. This compilation (not a mix, despite the title) offers a good survey of the form, spanning everything from early patches, fragments of electronic salsa, weird patches of North American Top 40 and oodles of 808-driven electro. As with any young, populist genre, funk's pleasures come not so much from the overall form as the bizarre moments of interruption, like the way Vanessa da Mata's voice is Antelated to feel and back on to K-Missina's "Boudhisa Andesito," or the processed horns that tear through "Tigres Imaginos." A vinyl edition is also available, which is a lovely idea — in Brazil, this stuff only exists as CD and MP3. □

# Dub

Reviewed by Steve Barker

## ARI UP DREAD MORE DAN DEAD

**COLLUSION CD**  
Maybe this time is just right for the return of the 11-year-perky reggae party sommelier Ari Up, foundation SIK and New Age Stoppers also know these as Madusa of Stone Love Sound. Her lyrical weights heavier than her locks—she began life as Arianne, daughter of Nora Fender, which makes her stepdaughter to John Lydon—and for those who may have written her off as a 'fashion dread', she's back to dash dem 'way. On the basement set (bests uncredited), she shows even more attitude than when she started out. Her chat is now pure patois from her long time spent in Kingston, where she became a cable TV star, and her wall is so outrageously off-key as it ever was. The album is a non-stop fusion of dancehall and dub stoppers, mixing reality and pure fun with righteous outrage, and a few cuts begging for the special dubplate treatment, particularly "Me Dub", replicated a cappella style to invite riddims and clash contests.

## WINSTON EDWARDS & BLACKBEARD DUB CONFERENCE: WINSTON EDWARDS & BLACKBEARD AT 10 DOWNING STREET STUDIO 10 LP

Produced by Winston Edwards in the UK in the late 70s with Melotony in disguise as The Wellback Band, and with the clear signature mix of Dennis Blackbeard (who's this is a must for anyone who found his Decibel album [on Pressure Sounds] a revelation. Boveil just kept telling his musical attributes get in the way of the dub fireworkers that were a fixture of the time, but with most of the original riddims lost in time and space, the titles alone suffice— "Who Made The Prime Minister's Menorah [set 01 1975], "Minister's Menorah" and "Shrine Bachelorette Palace Down". Also released on the same label, and not to be missed, are King Tubby Meets The Upsetter At The Cassa Rossa Of Dub, with some cranking early mixes by the Dubmeister rounded at the Black Ark, and Surrounding By The Dreads At The National Arena, celebrating the occasion when Tubby played a massive 12-hour session at Kingston's National Arena in support of Bob Marley & The Wailers. An unmissable and long unavailable vinyl set.

## JUNIOR DAN HONEST JONES CD

A collection of the three 10" vinyl pieces that have emerged on the London imprint over the past year gathering some of the finest dreads of Junior Dan, also Sydney Gustin, also Lord Hand Bassie. His previously best known for his work with Augustus Basi and Banning Spear, but is probably now famous as a collaborator with Barry's Damon Adams, investor in Honest Jones Records. "Look Out For The Devil" is the key track, actually recorded down at the Black Ark by a grouping known as the Solid Foundation along with Studio One legend Pabloe Black on

keyboards. All seven tunes here are excellent examples of deeply atmospheric late 70s roots, complete with accompanying dubs.

## DAMIAN MARLEY/STEPHEN MARLEY/METHOD MAN/ REDMAN WELCOME TO JAMROCK/ LYRICAL 44 TUFF GOOD INTERNATIONAL 12"

The last time one of Bob Marley's many offspring produced a tune as culturally meaningful as this was when Ziggy cut "Black My Story (Not History)" many moons ago. But this packs a lot more power, dealing in the now rather than the past. "People a dead at random... it youths a get blind by sardony," intoned Damian. In clear, dry and instrumental voices, the monotonous solo line is reworked from his latest all-star album Halfway Tree on ghetto youths international (via Motown). As JA puritans would have jumped James Brown into Jamaica, then Jamming, maybe the Junior Gong, Bob's youngest and progeny of Miss World Cindy Breakstone, has finally entered the real world. A little like Lisa Marie Presley making a tune as great as any of her Pa's pre-US army sides, and as unlikely.

## JACKIE MITTOO AYATOLLAH/MASH DOWN BABYLON BASMO REPLAY 12"

A similar vintage to the Willie Williams and Cousin Marshall tune "Rocking Unrespectably" that appeared on the same review last year, this one is another Jackie Mittoo production that's difficult to place between JA, NYC and Toronto. The sound is so dense, we should finger Madkiss studio as its source. Despite its early 80s vintage, the feel harks back to a deeper vein of roots. But the addition of a strongly delineated female chorus, "cooning" and "singing like they thought they've wandered into a Bart Simpson episode, just goes to make the thing all the more pensively appealing. With Jackie's mighty organ-churning intro over the driving stoppers' rhythm laying the ground for countless UK as dub tracks, the generic redemption lyrics are made redundant.

## PRINCE FAR I MEGABIT 25 1922-DUB FRANCIS WATKINS DOWNS CD

The temptation to put Far I's name on an album prompts a cut and paste job from Roy (The Royals) Cousins' back catalogue, but in the hands of Sir Freddie Watkiss aka the Minister of Noise, the result becomes almost tasteful. On the perimeters of Warrington he NAFR HQ when original tapes from Rarities, Tubby's and the Black Ark have been manipulated into their current state. It's a fairly reawakened piece of work, with Far I's voice samples worked into the mix à la Sheemus with Dub Syndicate. But the game is really up on "Ears-Gone", where the "trivial of music" sample appears in the mix on top of Vivian Jackson's "Baby You" rhythm and roles of Gregorian chant. All this is traceable back to the Minister's classic Weckio Soul period, during

which he bravely introduced Far I to Aisee Collins. This also features the divine vocals of Roy Cousins, plus contributions from Knowledge, Charlie Chaplin and the Minister's ex-muse Brenda Ray.

## ADRIAN SHERWOOD ON-U SOUND CRASH: SLASH AND MIX ON-U SOUNDING CD

This represents the On-U Sound history and reputation distilled into an album lasting just less than an hour with 31 tracks mixed, cut up and manipulated in an On-U Sound System DJ style. This is for the Japanese market, interestingly enough, as the East is far more familiar with this music, just as they are with rockabilly, ska, Ska R&B and a slew of other musics that receive stark cultural recognition in the land of their origin. Some of the tunes out to be genuinely ahead of its time, as the East is the dubbed brass band on The Marfa's "Jerusalem" and any of the African Head Charge tunes, while the west is anchored in 80s scores and sensibilities—Gary Clail is still embarrassingly arch and "Iradium Rock". As a cue, this will provide some much needed fan for hardcore On-U fans or act as an intro for the unsuspecting novice.

## PHILIP SMART PRODUCTIONS 5 BOROUGH FIRE: DIGITAL DANCEHALL NYC STYLE SERIES PLATINUM AND GOLD COMP LP

A double album collection of essential Philip Smart productions that runs from the 80s through to the 90s, which uncovers another lost but essential chapter in the real history of dance music. After all, Kool Haç couldn't occupy every street corner and his time, along with Jahmya, Scientist and many more contenders. Smart came up through the lobby system of sonic adventure. He worked as an assistant engineer before moving to NYC to originate HC & F studios, now one of the longest running and most important reggae studios in the United States. With Tubby's own genre-generating idiosyncrasies like "Lempe" to follow the mighty "Strong Tong", Philip Smart echoed the changes in Brooklyn, moving dancehall into the digital age with little sound-by-business like Sammy Levi's "Come On The Road" and Soon Success's "The Prince".

## VARIOUS THE BUNNY LEE ROCK STEADY YEARS MOL-SERIKTA CD/COMP

Coming rapidly after the excellent rocksteady set Safe Travel (Pressure Sounds) is another exemplary representation of this short-lived genre that ended the ska era and perfected the eventual domination of reggae. This set concentrates more on some of the most well-known hits of the era. Rocksteady allowed the influence of US soul and R&B to become dominant in the vocal stylings of the time, as evidenced by the increased number of cover versions, but more dramatic was the change in the sound that introduced the riddim drum

and melodic bass as pre-eminent in the mix. The set brings together some of Bunny Lee's greatest productions, the series of hits that give him his nickname of "Stylie", followed by the finest vocalists of the time including Slim Smith, Pat Kelly (the Sam Cooke of Jamaica) and Ken Posner. For many soul fans, all this may merely represent a second-class subgenre of the real thing, but for the real fans of Jamaican music of the period it's as if the sonic holy grail lies within tracks such as these.

## VARIOUS RELAXIN' WITH LOVERS VOLUME 4 SONY MUSIC ASSOCIATED CD

When in Beijing, people are likely to visit the Great Wall or the Forbidden City. We, I go the Grand World Second-Hand Electronics Market, and call on the many CD stalls there, picking up fantastic bargains of Japanese cut-outs such as the Lowers Rock volume from 2003 featuring the work of Clem Bushy. The series is still in print, with our material from DEB Studio 16, Tejen and homegrown Japan. I've already confessed to an irrational obsession with lovers rock, but anyone taking the trouble to search this one out will come under its spell. This is primarily due to the presence of a version of the old dee-wop chestnut "Silhouettes", here sung by Japan's "Biky Gomers" Kay. However, the song is followed by a riddim version also featuring DJ Prince Japelo and Rap on trombone—just the epitome of the catch, "out of strength comes weakness". Also available: "Love's Caught You In A Lie" Marika's cover of the Jones' Girls' anti-prosodic "Mum And Dad", set against music that fits the vintage bottled Lindbergh Grove.

## VARIOUS SHAKE THE NATIONS: A NEW BREAD OF DUB IV DUNHILL CD

This is a 'dub of many nations' sampler in the style that DubHead has applied mainly to the UK in the past. Nightlight Circus's Ryan Moore, a Canadian expat in Holland, kicks off with his latest incarnation as the Dub Project. The sound of "Impact" expands into a more alien, abstract framework contrasting with his recently established nu roots style as displayed on the charming cover, returning as tonight with Big Youth for "Dub Is What We Need". In between these, the international highlights are Japan's "That Producer"—their name may be mundane but they come with a well-developed bag of influences.

From France, Brian David and Black Silfitch may seem upwards Ray Cooper's Jam, Texas with their opening sample [not that Cooper wasn't bashful about trampling over the path laid down by Blind Willie Johnson], but "Circle Dub" evolves into a more of a space cowboy epic. Sir Lancelot is from Germany, AB-10 Norway and Infatry Rockers and Sound Innovations from both the USA. Other high quality acts are from from recent releases by UK nu roots stalwarts Wreckless, Nucleus Four, Indian Steppers and Jah Warner. □



# Electronica

Reviewed by Ken Hollings

## BOCA RATON & FREIBAND PRODUCT CROCHUA CO

First of all, documentation is not product. Live all live recordings, three performances captured during the 2004 Eurosonic festival at the Muziekcentrum in the Netherlands represent a police response to the listener for not being there. Product, on the other hand, makes you the entire and immediate focus of its existence. Put crudely, product is the shit: documentation is just the sound of shit happening. Over the first 11 tracks, Freiband eweak material from an earlier studio project, Microbes, as a restrained procession of surges and lunges on "Replay", while on "Crop" Motor Telling, AKA Boca Ratón, hatches and hatters through a series of nine electrostatic "Ones" which either represent the landing of the mothership or the effects of ball lightning. It's still not product, though.

## CHILOPOD SKIN PICKING POST OFFICE

To mark his debut release for Post Office Records, Chris Pearce pulls on a rubber monster mask, bugs his eyes magnificently and refuses to admit his human even for a second. It's a great trick if you can pull it off, and Chilopod's can clearly. Can't. And unpredictable crashes, protected rambling, incoherent mutterings, loose beats and spectral scratches of melody gradually take shape around each other to strange effect. What stops this alien celebration from lapsing into belated shadow and meaningless ambiguity, however, is an extremely bright and clean sound design that allows field recordings and studio processes to rub up against each other. Chilopod's world evidently has its own rules, even if it's hard to figure out what they might be.

## IGNATIUS GOSSAMER NOCKET RACER USA CO

Operating under the satirical name of Ignatius, Steve Westbrook knows how to break a drum machine's back on the holy wheel of experimental dance beats. His rhythms echo the paradoxical beauty of early industrial workouts such as Cabaret Voltaire's "Sluggo" for Jesus or Throbbing Gristles' "Too Good Down". The same restless sense that nothing else is really going on in their apoplexies here. Consequently Westbrook likes to start with a moment of uneasy distress and build from there. "Ankhbor" stretches lively then heaves itself into action, plucking light waves and random intrusions against each other, while "Death Truck" bulks Adm rhythms and compacted funk basslines around each other — a complex arrangement that laborslate Galen's uplinks on the ghostly realm that doses the album.

## CHRISTOPHER JUST ROLAND FLICK FAIRMONT PRINCESS #1527 CRATION CO

The fun starts quietly on Just's first album release in more than eight years but gets chemically active quite quickly after the moonball

unfolding of "Everyday (The Sedness I Carry On My Shoulders)", the BPM ratio climbs steadily from the low-impact keyboard intricacies of "Fuck the Light" to the refined Detroit Techno of "Love Bears" and "Majbewtink". Thrills start getting senses with the gloriously mindless disco stamp of "Rappers", the sophisticated House of "Room 1527" and "Skin Flick" and the flailing, three minute eludes pop that is "The Way To Success". There's nothing here you haven't heard before and you're sure to be tired of it in a week, but it will have been a great soves days

## NACHT PLANK SEPT VENTS LIMBET CO

Lee Harris sets his Metamorphosis and Nonan projects aside long enough to produce the first release for a new label set up by core members of the Type collective. Does such a venture really require yet another separate identity? True anonymity is both overrated and undervalued these days Ask anyone with an email address. Sept Vents is a concentrated work of considerable detail that tries not to draw attention to itself. Each track is consequently a moment of discovery nothing is given up easily. From the phrase resistance of "Quest" to the first civilizations of "Powerless", Harris makes sensitive use of his source material, deploying a carefully gauged selection of textures and effects.

## NW GREEN NIGHTS ORANGE DAYS NOISE FACTORY CO

Based in Montreal, Neil Weirick has been customizing equipment and tweaking software for some years now, taking minimalist Techno to deeper levels and bringing new complexities to said and post House production values. Mastered by Weirick in San Francisco, Weirick's work has the kind of sharpness and clarity usually lost amid the mark and decay of clicks and cuts and digital delays. "Rakealong After Dark" opens with a bold experiment of frequencies, startling repeated insinuations on top of each other without losing overall coherence. "Penny Sling North On Bay" keeps its measures discreet without disappearing entirely. It's what his tracks won't do that becomes most interesting.

## NEED NEW BODY WHERE'S BLACK BEN? SUE CHRISTIE CO

Sometimes it's better to do nothing at all than to do something well. The gaudy membership of Need New Body understood that such a proposition is dependent entirely on context. There is a folded up and faded Xerox copy of electronic dance music that's been stuck in someone's back pocket for months: a sound that beats the imprint of having been inadvertently set upon The dilapidated Old School rhythms of "Brute Day" somehow manage to make Throbbing Gristles sound like Scholastic D. "Propaganda" reveals just how imitate microphone checks can be. And yet there's something magnificent about San Francisco members Marshall Allen and Lynne Hill joining them on "Outer Space",

which in turn slides into the manipulated weirdness of "Inner Grit" and the thundering "Babooah + Seagull War + Die".

## ONE UMBRELLA SOLVE TELL ALL CO

Multi-instrumentalist Soren Lopate and Carlos Villarreal only like to give out a little at a time. Solve is a small composite of parts taken either from their self-released *Consolider* Opposite or from a forthcoming album due out on the Tell All label. It pushes back a try set of barriers over a very constricted period of time, deploying kalimba, theremin, synthesizer and stylophone alongside more traditional string and keyboard instruments in eight tracks with a collective running time of barely 25 minutes. However, it's on the longer tracks, such as the constantly evolving "Ode" and the mournful "Entrinco", that they really take the time to show what they can do. You may well find it's worth waiting for.

## PRAVEEN BACKED BY SPIRITS NO OIAA CO

Compositions like "Float", "Haze" and "Melody", which sound exactly as their titles suggest, unexpectedly have their place — but would it be one where they might best be noticed? Praveen Sharma is US-based but his music seems ultimately destined for the Buddha Bar in Paris, probably on a week night and most likely early evening. Not that there's anything wrong with that. There's a fine line between sound design and interior decorating, and Backed by Spirits helps draw it. Even when the going gets gritty, as on "New Loves", his tracks have the kind of gain that only mood lighting can provide.

## PROSWELL MERCK MIX 4 MERCK CO

Chicago-based producer Joseph Misa, AKA Proswell, gets the rest of the talent in the series of Merck mix-ups, and the change seems to be doing everyone good. Instead of featuring a range of artists from their roster, as on the exhausting 46-track Merck Mix 3, this adventurous label has just gone for one. In return Proswell has brought back the crash edit as it's all going, jamming together tracks from his previous releases *Nonan* and *Carrot Dancer* alongside previously unreleased material, and it works. "RIP" and "Thousa Discoscape" keep the dancefloor momentum going, while more sketchy outings like "Trag/Tromms" and "Whywax" may leave you feeling thoughtful.

## RAPOON THREE PILLARS OF FIRE THESCHOPFONTECA CO

After several releases for Staatplaat and Seikens, starting with *Drum Circle*, Robin Storey offers a small ceremony for the Lisbon Festival. Founder and former member of *Avatar*/Haze, Storey seems less concerned with the feeling of intuition inside than with the folds and wrinkles that accompany its

weaving away. Seven *Avatars Of Fire* presents a sequence of worn and tarnished surfaces during the course of its steady progression. Occasional and the covering of a network, the jangling of chains and clanking of powers merge with gradually ascending progressions and dislodged top loops, giving the overall impression of a machine running down and giving itself up to corrosion.

## SEMUIN PROVINCE AUDIO DREDS CO

With cover artwork by FS Blum, mastered by Greg Davis and released under a name that conveys next to nothing, this album from Berlin's Jochem Smeets is one of those fine-tuned forest creatures that only emerges from the shadows when you pretend to be looking away. The structures are delicate, barely more than low screams of acoustic sounds, rumpled scratches processed effects. Pay close attention and they all but disappear. The occasional ball gesture may still catch you unaware, however, such as the extended quotation from Stravinsky's *Symphony Of Wind Instruments* at the end of "Lark" or the sugary, rippled splayed voices on "Ukubul". Out of such moments are strong passages born. It's a really fucking great record," says Greg Davis. It does it. And so will you.

## STUDIO PANKOW LINENBURG CITY CENTRE OFFICE TOWERBLOCK CO

Some artists have had whole careers in the time it's taken this to emerge. In tandem with their Coyote project with ethnographers Keli Berger, David Moulton and James Hodge have also been collaborating between 1999 and 2004 with new best friend Kai Kainer on an elaborate set of 11 compositions that showcase and twist electronic musical forms into some pleasing new shapes. While such high-calibre labels as Plus B, Nings Tane, Warp, Fox and Plug Records would be the poster without the likes of Moulton and Hodge getting into the mix, they do have a tendency to play chicken with a pleor's momentum, stretching a groove way past the moment when most producers would be sitting back listening to the replay. All the same, there's a huge amount here to enjoy both your time and your perferences.

## SUN PLEXUS OR OU FERRAILE? A QUELLE PROFONDEUR? ROMA RND CO

Self-proclaimed inventors of *Anal-Cor*, Gallic rockers San Plexus hate California and nuclear energy. Which is obviously why their latest release is dedicated to the savage splendour of sun worship and all its dazzling cultural foibles. Fans of punky dark machine theaters *Marshall* Urbane, San Plexus also hate the music, as well as the best policy, to make an unwholesomely nasty sound. What makes them particularly noisy, however, is the adept way they use alienness and emptiness to build up the threat. Meanwhile the jarring dynamics whirled up on a track like "Wavelength" take care of the rest. □

# Hip-hop

Reviewed by Hua Hsu

## ALIAS & EHREN LILLIAN HYPERCUBE

The concept alone inspires a tear: When young Eviner heard brother Braden's latest record as Alias, he knew what he had to do. He packed his instruments (real instruments, not no-damn-reachers contraptions) and flew across the country so they could make a record. Dedicated to their grandmother Lillian, the result is breathtaking. They may be little more than teens on a keypad, but Alias's drum programs actually possess something resembling affect—they always seem to be stamping along in a tartan or tunnelling about sleepy Little Brother Eviner pitches in with turns and a surge of other devices, all of which manage to disguise the relativity. The baseline of "Lullabies" hugs the floor closely, a pinching shuffie receding a step closer in passively slow motion. "62nd And West" opens with reeds on a tin umbrella until some awestruck, *This Week in Baseball*-sounding strings brighten the scene. Again, Alias's drums carry the pile forward. The title track is a gorgeous, bare, windswept piece that relies on a swooning synthesizer. Ehren's tentative, then romantic puffs and Alias's trout-like percussion track.

## BREAKTHROUGH BREAKTHROUGH KIDRON CD

On the track labelled "Intro", guest rapper Dre (no, not that one) heralds Japan's Breakthrough as "A Japanese crew ahead of their time." I'm not sure whether this is completely accurate. Consisting of producers DSK Invisible, Masaya Fanzasta and DJ Jin, Breakthrough are the latest Japanese group to sound pretty much how people who toured 1994 with all hip-hop seemed to sound. They make a wonderful record, track with strong textures (for all you 80s Wonder fans there), sparkling, jazz-inflected arrangements (for all you Amp Fiddler fans out there), and always lively English language rapping (for any Masayake fans out there). Weirdly, Masayake are the beneficiaries of one of the most basic themes — "This Way Beams" sounds like an upright bass, a spare drum accompaniment and a bunch of shit falling out of a closet. "Chalk It Up" is a winner, with a nicely muted Bohemian whispering over a scuffling, rock-heavy bass. The Spacecraft track has "Radio One Space Rhythms," a very strange track built on way too many drums per measure — it sounds like four Timbaland tracks you're going to your station. "Finger Funk" is a great track made up of door-drum thrums, Mark De Cive-Lowe's keyboards (thus the title) and Ocasol? rapping about Mark De Cive-Lowe's keyboards.

## THE HERBALISER GENERALS NEW YORK CD

There's something strange here that will have you hitting rewind and sampling the internet for clues. "Generals" purports to be a posse cut featuring The Herbaliser's free-swinging from

fanzines and Jean Grae's handpicked odd squad, there's a white girl named Heather O'Callaghan from Boston, there's a four-musical-instrument named Two Chappas, there's a synthy Southamer named Daddy Mike, there's a leback to the point of constance Iohano named AK. There's an eighth grade girl who goes by the name of MacGyver who raps about being in eighth grade — "Yrs a bad ass, rap mators in my teacher's apfles" It can't be — it DID! Did Jean Grae actually find five rappers representing five different styles nobody has ever heard of? Probably not. Thanks to the magic of the studio, she has recorded a posse track by herself, just for fun, just to show you she's better than your favourite rapper. (If Jean Grae is already your favourite rapper, not assumed — she handles the clean-up verse.) Besides O'Callaghan, whose clowning voice seems designed to annoy, Grae handles each persona perfectly, especially the gutter-talking Mike. What would have been really cool, though, is if it was revealed that Grae was actually Eddie Izzia and Jane Werry of Herbaliser as well.

## IMMORTAL TECHNIQUE BIL LADEN VINTAGE/RECORDING 12"

Now this is just a — a sampled quotation from Al Shaidra, a guest spot from Chuck D and verses from the eternally passed off IE, and yet a best from Eminem's former DJ, Green Lanters. White's called Anti-Bush politics traverse all rap incomes, and perhaps "Bil Laden" is the sort of "Why-to-the-NH-degrees bombast" we need. With no overpassionate but tightly focused flow, Ted has this ability for making somewhat predictable observations sound weighty: "Callist abortion matter in a medical looking/But don't give a fuck about any children from them, he wants down the shank funds, Fox News, Borteyning-talking, the conspiracy to bury Bush's campaign and affirmative action — That shit is a pathetic excuse for reparations." he scoffs. Chuck D's baritone handles the chorus on the Lanters mix: "Bil Laden don't blow up the projects, it was you, nigga!" And, in case you didn't get that this song wasn't some incoherent, anti-Osama screed, he adds, "Bush knocked down the towers!" The remix offers itself as the radio-friendly version, with a sampled line from Jackass, Mac Def rapping for Chuck and shuffling, mixer-key march that recalls the soundtrack to Eminem's 8 Mile. I really don't see why he's heading the on the radio.

## MAC DRE & MAC MALL DREDIO THEZZ ENTERTAINMENT 12"

For their recent gut team album Go US Open, Northern California rappers Mac Dre (RP) and Mac Mall adopted new, tennis-themed handles. Dre named himself from Masaya while Mall became Mall MacDefense. "Dredio" is the best song on the album's first single, a bit of electro nostalgia that riffs off Royce's

"Rachascrity" (or was it MC Foster?), "20 sackin'/Hemi slapper/Magga go dumb when they hear me rapin'". Dre lazes, while a reworded line boasts that a dame a guitar "just ain't in traffic." No slight to the Macs, but the treat here is E-40 — after all, the first words out of his mouth are "Look out, pimp, Uncle!" He holds it down for Wallace, where they stretch infinitely in the parking lot blacktop, drink Welch's Grape Juice, "snort dog food and pop pills and pop".

## MF GRIMM GINGERBREAD MAN RS 12"

It's hard to take a record too seriously when the cover features a meat-grinding gingerbread cookie pulling two smoking pistols. MF Grimm, though, does not offer himself as a trifling presence. The New York rapper was on the cusp for the better part of the 1990s, having flossed his maneuvered get alongside folks like Kurious, Kool G Rap and KMD. The chance never arrived. A shooting left him confined to a wheelchair, then came the prison time. Despite all this, it's somewhat difficult to take "Gingerbread Man" too literally. Over a familiar funk loop (supplied by DJ Crucial) and two elements of Bogs, the liberated Grimm gets poetic about his life of violence, offering to put a "kiss in your nigger". Bouncing fast and decked with tiny singables, Grimm sounds like he's having too much fun with the beat to really mean his rhymes. In contrast, "My Love" does not fudge with its interludes. Over MF Doom's nice piano triad and click-clack beatbox drums, Grimm's braggadocio devolves into a doleful assault on the leeches among us: "They snipe in your face, look you in your eyes/About all your energy and leave you dry, too dehydrated to cry."

## SUBTITLE YOUNG DANGEROUS HEART GOLD STANDARD LABORATORIES CD

Taking somewhere in the outer limits of the Los Angeles underground (sorry, I don't like the word limit), you will find a very weird rapper named Subtitle. I think this is what the cover, an image of Los Angeles's labyrinthine sprawl, is trying to get across. His style falls somewhere between the rubber-band gladiator school of Project Blowed and the naked madness of someone on a street corner proktying loudly about nothing in particular. "Palm Springs" opens with a half-hearted hook: "Ringside/Cowboy/Deer-may-come/Keep my armor level 3/Use the OG version of 'Cub Love'/Where the palm frond Ain't/I don't want to walk there "I Cry Crying is a nice moment. Rattling Asapovans, No Can Do, Budsader and Subtitle is a battle of the word. The battle plays out in a war "Crew Cut (For Sale)," a 12-deep posse cut, features various members of The Living Legends, The Sheapeaters and Blowed being as inscrutable as possible — at one point, it sounds like 2Mex comes in with "carnies announcements." Like I said, this guy is weird. "Go-Gnash-let's fire, Subtitle drag" diagonal march over a so-so bass line, "Fast Food/Fast Death" features our hero walking through taekwondo, and another

song seems dedicated to the pleasures of sleeping.

## THE TAPE VS ROM AUTERVERSE KITHFM CD

It's a good policy to be suspicious of anyone with a song titled "Hip-hop is Dead." Always. While this collaboration between producer The Tape and rapper RQM achieves some degree of difference from most other releases in the hip-hop bin, it's not exactly the stoke through the heart of rap that we are eagerly awaiting. The tuneful "Canards" seems cribbed from the folkloristic set, all wispy guitars and modest drum smacks. "Sexy Sunrises" is another nice one, a track that slowly builds around fidgety bass and some sort of inebrium, backwards-guitar-sounding (auto-reversed?) devices. "Lonely Planet Revisited" is not another take on the New York Dols song, it is, though, a rare case where aquatic guitar sounds OK over beats. "Nuclear Sunset" is as gloomy and glodding as the title suggests, while the delicate roasting of "Our" is a perfect, terrible-based closer. It's a shame that one of the most interesting songs on this wonderfully subtle album is the aforementioned swipe at hip-hop. "What you call hip-hop nowadays is just another corporate scheme/The image has changed but it's still the American Dream/Except now it's the grandchildren of slaves supporting slave labour owners." Gaitry as charged, but it's not going away anytime soon.

## VARIOUS ESSENTIAL UNDERGROUND HIPHOP 2 UNIDENTIFIED XXXCD

Any compilation featuring 30 current hip-hop tracks already has its work cut out for it. Labelling the compilation both "essential" and "underground" only worsens the situation. But this completely random smattering of tracks from the Landscaped catalogue is interesting because of the calibre of artists (Nas, Ghostface, The Game) and the total flouting of sample clearance laws: "Let 'Em Hang" features a mangled clip of Eddie Diamond's "Do What You Gotta Do" and an under-the-weather, huffing Nas trading rue street raps with Lade, while Kurupt's "Is In The Morning" is a sad imitation of Ice-T's signal, which itself was a so-so imitation of Schoolly D's "PSK, What Does It Mean?". Better odds is "Time", a Queensbridge pride track featuring Nas, Nature and AZ that samples — galp — William's "Canessa Whisper", with Nas contributing another phoned-in rap about life on the streets. Thankfully the compilation also features Ghostface's excellent "The Drummer" as well as some quality material from AZ and Cormega MOPs. "All Of The Above" is a crusher, the beat's got you going a bit each time Dimes and Farris start wincing. The pair also soar on the future theme, just a short while back and heartbeat of "Here Today, Gone Tomorrow," a track that is all about the minimalism of the ext sound. □

# Jazz & Improv

Reviewed by David Keenan

## STEVE BACZKOWSKI/CHRIS CORSANO/PAUL FLAHERTY THE DIM BULB WEE MINT MUSIC CO

The inwardly naive of the baritone sax means it's not an instrument that you immediately associate with high energy free jazz. However, over the past few years the Buffalo, New York based improviser Steve Baczkowski has been one of the few contemporary operators to attempt to get to grips with a less-challenging capabilities. The *Dim Bulb* is the first widely available release to document this intensely physical player, in the company of two of his biggest boosters, the New England bigtime of former Chris Corsano and saxophonist Paul Flaherty. It's a supremely unimposing set, a 16-minute assault that foresees any notion of call and response for the kind of freneticism simultaneously favoured by post-Coltrane conceptualists like Peter Brötzmann and Frank Wright. This is combined with a wild personal aspect as intimately related to electric post-hardcore tangents as it is to the idiosyncratic CWS of the three individual players. Baczkowski also plays one of his own compositions — a "Vibrant" with a highly vocal swing — that opens up whole new areas of ecstatic spiritual poetry.

## ANTHONY BRAXTON & MATT BAUDER 2 + 2 COMPOSITIONS 442 MUSIC CO

Much like Cecil Taylor and his emblematic use of equations and occult poetry, Anthony Braxton's use of obscure graphic notation and numbering systems has lent it a veneer of astute academic discourse and personal hermeticism. This has contributed to sidelining its massive contribution to the ecstatic stream of free jazz/mainline genres through. Why his recent association with Minipien from nose the West Eyes will do something to alter the narrow control he's still seen as operating in, but in the meantime 2 + 2 Compositions is another significant instrument of liberated sound, misquoting as dry diagrammatical device. Braxton looks up with a trio led by Matt Bauder, a young neotome from Chicago with a penchant for cutting improvisations with electronic process. Although Bauder sticks to the tenor saxophone and dardet, his two compositions — "Surfacing" and "Dots" — display his inmost in platform timbres and dispersed sounds. Ethereal note rolls dissolve like spirals and chains of microtonal musical events combine in the most convincingly literal representation of Ghost Train Music outside Braxton's own canon. Braxton's own compositions also seem infected by Bauder's approach, even if they seem closer to jazz-as-jazz.

## RHODRI DAVIES & INGAR ZACH ICEIRL

Beautiful duo set from these two European improvisers which is a deal more removed from any established masters of intuitive post-SWE

though than you might initially suspect. Davies plays hard throughout, but right from the first thing he steals away from both the scabbiest string attack favoured by most post-Dave Bailey saxophonists and the heavy metal assault of instrumental players like Zeena Parkins, opting instead for a slow blue of driving notes that flare like flaming electric currents into foggy almost medieval-sounding constructs. Zach — one of Dave Bailey's most inoperating duo partners — stays away from the bulk of the lead, preferring to focus on mechanical contraptions and what sounds like electronically stimulated prayer bowls in order to illuminate Davies's dilated constructs, and there are points where the constellations of slow, zoning tones blend to meet percussive Frank Pary's discursive solo work. Over on the bass, things are slightly more tangible, with Davies handling the harp a little more aggressively and invoking the kind of taut, intuitive exchange that flows in tumbled out over textual or melodic stability.

## JAMES FINN TRIO CLAZAR DE TOROS PLEAN FEED CO

Despite setting out to "capture in music the essence of the bullfight in all its radiant glory", *Clazar De Toros* offers a lot more than simply Hemingway-esque power-blowing and improvisatory machismo. James Finn is an up and coming New York based tenor saxophone who draws on the Sonny Rollins/David S. Ware tradition of combining compositional foresight with a facility for bold single notes and the gust of pure spirit. Here he's teamed with a rhythm section made up of drummer Wayne Smith and bassist Domingo Desai, the latter of whom plays with the same kind of minutely focused abandon that he brings to the bulk of his live work with Cecil Taylor. Playing against the insistent sense of forward momentum implicit in Finn's acerbic tone conceptions, the bass and drums work to isolate single tracks in an external sea, forsaking more linear pulsive strategies for hovering pockets of suspended time. Although Finn lacks the kind of raw jaw required to deal convincingly with the more perilous upper registers, it actually works to his advantage, lending the higher runs an affecting vulnerability.

## GIORGIO GASLINI GASLINI PLAYS SUN RA SUN NOTE CO

Italian pianist and composer Giorgio Gaslini has previously recorded solo piano albums based around interpretations of the works of both Albert Ayler and Thelonious Monk, and for his sake on the extensive back catalogue of Herman Sorey (Bount has opted for recordings of some of the bandleader's more esoteric material, including obscure tracks like "Our In Space", "A Quiet Place in The Universe" and "Kingdom Of Not"). But despite his nose for some of the wackier aspects of Ra's oeuvre, Gaslini has the ear of a modern pianist, with the result that his "daring" of Ra's conceptions all too often means leaving out Ra's most overt rhythmic, tonal and conceptual gambits in favour

of rationalised melodic arc. Indeed, Gaslini's own piano playing barely touches on the kind of bent wickers that Ra was always able to factor into his work and his decision to strip quotes from the *Well-Tempered Clavier* of its Bach into every track strikes of some kind of respectful high art strategy which Ra's revolutionary work neither suits nor requires.

## GUSH ELECTRIC EEL DEBID LP

Gush is the trio of powerhouse Swedish improviser Måna Gustafsson on sitarphone, flute, soprano, soprano, tenor and baritone sax, Sam Sandell on electronics, piano, harmonium and voice, and Raymond Smith on guitar, percussion, objects, amplified and processed instruments. Recorded on 6 November 1998 at Stockholm's renowned Fjögren studios, *Electric Eel* touches on a set of operating bases, from the slightest of semi-silent codes through moments of evocative industrial drone and convulsive throat dialogues. While Sandell's melodic, Schellenbach-style piano work provides a vague anchor to the known jazz world, there are moments of bent electronic pantheism here that send disaster to the kind of subversive infiltration of LPMs, grunge like Doo-Doomies and Arnie, albeit born to pieces by Gustafsson's transcending horn work.

## FRED LONBERG-HOLM TRIO OTHER VALENTINES ASTROTIC CO

Other Valentines is a set of cello/bass/drum settings of variously sourced compositions that see us start original like "Almost Mid-Day" and "I Got Nothing" which sound as specific as anything from post-rock/chamber ensembles like Radiohead, and corners of newwave by groups like The Cars, Pink Floyd and The Run-As-A-River. The covers mostly follow the melodic arc of the originals before politely extrapolating the base material into whole new series of mind. Their reading of Syd Barrett's "Woid Land" is particularly glibly and can't help but bring to mind the kind of generic sleight of hand practised by glib would-be modernists like The Bad Plus. While there's certainly more conceptual depth to Lonberg-Holm's work, the overriding feel is of a technical workout as well as the result of a kind of alchemical process, with the appeal that this is as impressive as good jowry. Which isn't bad.

## OREN MARSHALL INTRODUCTION TO THE STORY OF SPEDY SPONDA/PART ONE IN A SILENT ROOM SLOWFOOT CO

First performed at Wapping Hydraulic Piano Studio in January 2002, *The Story Of Spedy Sponda* is a personal fantasia scored for tube and electronics by the improvising UK musician Oren Marshall. Parts of the set recall the luminous reviews of Terry Riley's all-night rhythms, with huge loops of dancing sets here appearing to flash in and out of temporal existence

somewhere just beyond an imaginary event horizon. Elsewhere Marshall references music hall stylings and children's orchestras in a way that situates the unfolding events in some kind of Mills Road-style Newland, even as he applies some challenging modernist strategies involving ranks of interconnected tubas played simultaneously (imagine Maher Shalib Haz and Inghram Marshall soundtracking an episode of *Railway* scripted by Dylan Thomas and you're halfway there).

## JOE MCPHREE EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON HOLMSTROM LP

In the wake of Brad Nordstrom's and Anthony Braxton's late 80s investigations into the increased intuitive space afforded by saxophone improvisation, multi-instrumentalist Joe McPhee has established himself as one of the masters of the form. Albums like 1977's *Isner* and 1990's *As Seniors As Your Life* are major solo investigations that combine formal meat with moments of gripping metaphysical drama. *Everything Happens For A Reason* is a beautiful addition to the shelf, a series of solo recordings recorded live in concert in November 2002 as part of the West Coast Sound Festival, Music Unlimited. Across the set, McPhee switches between pocket trumpet, soprano and alto saxophone, and his attack is just as conceptually dense, invoking skin textures and moments of gurgling rooster some minute and areas of pure high register song the next. Besides a luminous reading of Duke Ellington's "Come Sunday", the set is made up of McPhee's own compositions — both instant and already scored — and includes dedications to fellow spirits like Bill Dean, Joe Gasdolio and Steve Lue. The LP comes on a limited, hard-numbered edition of only 482 copies, with a beautiful silk-screened, no paper sleeve.

## RAUHAN ORKESTERI & LAUKHEIT LAMPAT SYLLISSAN OOT DEBID LP

Rauhan Orkesteri's recent single on the Finnish LP label may be the greatest seven inches of gut wrenching avant jazz intensity since Bortolomaeus's brain-erasing "Goatscantor" back in 1993. This album — their second vinyl to date — continues in the loose, high-energy vein of the single with a distill of nastily compound high-register hymnals and layered bottom and blues. The first track here matches the legendary *Corn Of The World* group led by Rank Wright in terms of visceral time-bending insanity, with disorienting Satyr Marry-style percussion working folk tattoos into maddy waltzes of sophisticated gear. Also scattered throughout the LP are duo tracks by Rauhan Orkesteri and Laukheit Lampat that map a greater arc than the modernism by combining hand percussion and amplified instruments in minimalist traditions that sound somewhere between Mothers Of Invention, Jan Bennet's solo work and The Geds. Comes on sick pink vinyl too. □

# Modern Composition

Reviewed by Julian Cowley

## ARDITI QUARTET ULTIMA ARDITI VOL 1 AURORA CD RAGNHILD BERSTAD RESPIRO AURORA CD

Ultima is Oslo's main contemporary music festival, the largest event of its kind in Scandinavia. Under its aegis, Ivona Arditi's string quartet have recorded four impressive recent works by Norwegian composers. Ragnhild Berstad's *Respira* weaves ornamental flourishes into a play of variegated sonic textures, and in the process displays The Arditi's awesome bowing control. Jon Øivind Ness generated *Downs of De* darkness out of George Harrison's song of that name. It's a suggestively distended quartet, freighted with extreme tension and implied exorcism. Even Lyder Kåre's *En Høst-Um* Nights emerged from ideas about incoherence, rigorously defined sound forms embodying abstract observations within a grammar of exposition. Rolf Waite's *Phenolose 3* incorporates indeterminacy and expands the musicians' input by means of an IRCAM computer program. A live Arditi recording of Berstad's *Respira* is included on *Respiro* along with so other pieces, ranging in instrumental character from the title track, for solo distillation and tape, to *Embruno* for solo female voice, choir and orchestra. Berstad's sensitivity to gradations of timbre infuses her music with an airy, well-tit quality plus surface shimmer and sheen. That's put in the service of inventive forms, persuasively coherent, robust and fresh.

## CHRIS BROWN ROGUE WAVE T240M CD

Chris Brown, co-director of the influential Center for Contemporary Music at Mills College in California, is a composer with distinctive things to say. Yet this is the first release documenting his music for almost a decade, it's a fine reminder of his accomplishment in computer music and in symbolic couplings of acoustic instruments with electronics that are seriously interesting and often great fun. The title track brings Brown's electronic treatments into uprisings alignment with Williams Winant's choreographed performance and early whirling ballroomer, and DJ Eddie Def's chattering turntables. Brown performs a musingly high-tech computer duet with Guillermo Baldino; there's the serious-minded interaction of a computer network ensemble; the effervescent dangle of electronically modified metallic percussion overlaid with bass trombone; plus a signature electronic transformation of piano tones.

## JOHN CAGE 44 HARMONIES FROM APARTMENT HOUSE 1776/ CHEAP IMITATION NMC CD

In the process of composing some pieces, John Cage lodged himself passively within the music of earlier composers in order to work transformations. The composite bait for 44

Harmones was a group of 18th century American writers of vocal music, the best known today being William Billings. Ivona Arditi's string quartet adaptation of this set of 44 brief pieces accentuates the paradoxical status of Cage's relationship of those hymns and anthems. A distinct period flavor lingers in translucent moments that Cage pulled from the syntactic coherence of the originals, moments that invade the imagination like the delicate tracery of a fossil form or elegant calligraphy of some cryptic text. Cheap imitation grew out of the vocal line from Erik Satie's *Socrate*. Arditi's choice playing is ideally suited to the enigmatic gracefulness of Cage's 1977 solo violin transcription.

## CHRIS DENCH IK(S/LAND/S) NMC CD

Londoner Chris Dench settled in Australia in 1992 and entered into a successful creative alliance with the group ELISION, who perform his music on *IK(S/Land/S)*. Opening track *Indigloss* (1990) is a glittering music scored for solo percussion, claret, trombone, guitar, double bass and flute doubling cello. Its music with rimmed hand and glist, attractive yet rigorous, and ELISION are in their element. *Funk* (1991) scored homage to the Coltrane/Rashed All partnership. Peter Howie is a percussionist with Carl Rosen on bass clarinet. *Funk* affirms Dench's resistance to conceptual dryness, although the demands he makes on performers are vividly displayed here and in solo works like *Rains Within*. The title track and the blending aspect of the grace of flesh feature mezzo-soprano Deborah Kayser and exhibit the brilliancy that radiates from the knotty intellectual depths of Dench's work.

## IVAN FEDELE QUARTETTI 1-3/VIAGGIATORI DELLA NOTTE/ELECTRA GUIDE STRONDIUMUS CD

The ubiquitous Arditi turn their attention to pieces by Ivan Fedele, an Italian composer still little known in Britain but with an international reputation that has led to him giving lectures at Harvard, the Sorbonne and IRCAM. Composed over the course of 20 years, his three string quartets give some sense of his development, from experimentation through expressiveness to a sophisticated grasp of structural modality and dynamic relationships. Fedele is interested in mathematics and in psychoacoustics; above and beyond that he writes with real flair, so movements of mind are bound into stylish and fierce string innovations. The violin solo *Viaggiatori Della Notte* allows Ivona Arditi to demonstrate yet again his extraordinary interpretive virtuosity, and Electro Gliss (1984) is a pyrotechnic display for two violins and viola.

## BRIAN FERNEYHOUGH CHAMBER MUSIC STRONDIUMUS CD

Ferneyhough's reputation for fearsome difficulty has been cultivated with modest zeal. A new

release arrives with a sense of obligation to commit additional mental energy to the act of listening. It seems no more to invite a casual dip than Louis Zukofsky's hermetic epic poetry recommends itself as bedtime reading. But this recording by Ensemble Recherche of five pieces for strings and wind instruments, written between 1994 and 2001, offers stimulation of a kind that is not once needed and direct. Self-aware play of intellect is evident in a piece such as *hopbits*, but Ferneyhough doesn't baffle the ear and the interplay of strings, wind and percussion is immediately satisfying as well as suggestive of precedents, parallels and possibilities. *Flumes*, *Strong* too, in *Nonine* A 3 and *Shrekrick* complete this rewarding set.

## GABRIELE HASLER FLOW FOOLISH MUSIC CD

German vocalist Gabriele Hasler has recorded regularly with imposing musicians such as guitarist Anders Wilen and pianist John Wolf Brennan. Established in jazz contexts, she has a so shown readiness to take considerable risks, interpreting texts by Gertrude Stein, adapting Renaissance songs by John Dowland. *Flow* is a composition in eight parts for solo voice and electronics, recorded in a church in Bremen in August 2002. Each sequence is named after a literary work – Woolf's *The Waves*, Kerouac's *On The Road* – although the texts aren't discernibly reflected in the content. Starting with a three-stringing drum reminiscent of Tibetan monks chanting, Hasler runs through a repertoire of extended techniques, yelps and yodels, sounding at times like Meredith Monk or Jean Le Barbara but mostly imposing her own stamp. Electronic means are used very effectively to layer and embellish, and Hasler exercises consistent control of the solo flow.

## JASON KAO HWANG THE FLOATING BOX NEW WORLD SACD

As an improvising violinist, Jason Kao Hwang has been heard with the likes of Anthony Braxton, Henry Threadgill and William Parker. As leader of The Far East Side Band, he has been a major player on the Asian-American jazz scene. *The Floating Box* is a chamber opera written in collaboration with librettist Catherine Piliou, drawing on hours of interviews yet recorded in New York's Chinatown. Hwang's writing for an East-West ensemble that includes pipa (Chinese lute) as well as accordion, erhu (two-stringed violin) and cello is stylish and convincing. But the acoustic voices that deliver the text have an unyielding trained formality that detracts the ear from instrumental subtleties and from details of the storyline. The effect is as if the distinctively Chinese-American novelist James Hong Kingston had chosen to write in the style of Henry James.

## MINENSEMBLET PARTY MUSIC ELUSION CD

A string quartet, wind quartet and piano comprise *Minensemble*, a chamber ensemble

run since 1992 by the regional Norwegian body Music in Nordland. Vivacity is their forte, the four pieces on offer are spent in mood and coloration, but high spirits and animated ensemble surges are well suited to the group's collective temperament. Best, Mark Adley clearly recognised this when responding to their commission with his *Party Music*, musically animating emotional ups and downs. Vivid timbres and dynamic ebbs and flows make Jonathan Harvey's *Tenish* another suitable choice. After the steady introversion of Henrik Hellmuth's *Songs From The Outside*, *Minensemble* play to their real strengths again on Jon Nordh's *Donkey Song*. This piece draws inspiration eloquently from Miss Teenage Run. Although it scarcely emulates electro-punk energies, its lively character reflects the spirit of this chamber group.

## ALEXANDER KNAIFEL AMICITA SOLE ECM CD

Knaifel, born in Basel in 1943, lives in St Petersburg. A cellist by training, he is no longer able to play due to physical problems, but Matthias Rosztopch obliges on this recording of his 20 music solo for cello, Psalm 51 (50), It has the familiar halo of Eastern European sacramental music – a long, sober melodic line, unfolding very gradually, contemplative and redemptive of humanity. It's played impeccably, but listeners lacking the required degree of piety or an especial love for the cello are likely to find it a slow haul. *Amicita Sole* (Clothes With The Sun), recorded in a Lutheran church that plays its own crucial part in the music, is undeniably very beautiful. A soprano voice, shadowed lightly and sporadically by a choir of boys' voices, hovers around suggestively placed and soft harmonies from the strings and wind instruments of the State Hemisphere Orchestra. It's with hearing for the emotional impact of its sustained restraint.

## STEFAN WOLPE ENACTMENTS HAT HUT CD

Piano music selected from three decades illustrates shifts in Stefan Wolpe's approach to composing. *March And Variations For Two Pianos*, recorded here for the first time by Josef Chvojka and Stefan Schläpfermacher, dates from 1933, before Wolpe fled Germany for Jerusalem and then America, where he settled in 1938. It was a period when Wolpe undertook study with Webern, but this is a rousing listening negotiation between popular form and a modernist sensibility that appears cerebral to dramatic; and communicative concerns. The *Good Spirit Of A Good Cause* (1942) is transitional, another march but opening outwards despite its brevity. *Enactments* For Three Pianos was completed in 1953, by which time Wolpe was installed at Black Mountain College, North Carolina, a crucial center of avant-garde ferment, where he clashed with Cage. It's a persuasive move into projective composition, a brilliantly crafted montage of sound shapes and masses. □

# Outer Limits

Reviewed by Jim Haynes

## ROD COOPER FRICTION ROOM CD

Australia's answer to Harry Belafonte is Rod Cooper, who has extended his craftsmanship in furniture design into a body of unique sound sculptures. While there are no knagges of his instruments accompanying his *Friction CD*, a simple Google search yields stations of long-stinged instruments, large steel plates fitted with reverberating springs, a grinding instrument inspired by the husky-grudy, and an oversized variation of a kalimba. Considering that *Friction* represents ten years of work upon these instruments, they deserve a bit of documentation. Regardless, Cooper's recordings of their sounds remind percussive toppers against huge blocks of growling abrasives that give *Ogoun* a run for their money.

## YANNICK DAUBY ALISEN CLOUDMIRROR CD

In 2002, French sound artist Yannick Dauby went into Amsterdam's STEW studio and emerged with this 20 minute "ethereal sketch of high frequency acoustic feedback phenomena." Unlike his recent recordings of small object interplay with manipulated field recordings, *Alisen* has all the trappings of pure electronic composition. His acoustic feedback streams through simple effects of delay, pitchbending and stereo panning, coagulating into meandering pools of softened electronic. In his deft control of this potentially volatile source material, Dauby enriches his sinusoidal phase patterns with the sinuous, bunker-memorial overtones that rippled through such sci-fi film classics as *Andromeda Strain* and *Forbidden Planet*.

## SOPHIE DURAND & MANU HOLTERRACH VERRES HARBACHQUES: UN CLOUDMIRROR CD

Far from being a perfume trick for costants on *The Gang Show*, the glass harmonica has a curious history that dates back to the 18th century. In fact, Benjamin Franklin was so taken by its angelic tones that he devised his own mechanical instrument with an expanded tonal range in a series of interlocking bowls that spun upon a horizontal axis. Nowadays, there's less French sound artist and instrument builder Manu Holterrach, who has reinvented the glass harmonica by returning to the original use of rubbing wine glasses with wet fingers. Instead of having multiple glasses for each note, he's fitted his oversized wine glass bells with a valve that regulates the water level and in turn controls the pitch of the harmonics. Holterrach designed his glass harmonica to be played by two people; indeed, in concert he performs with Sophie Durand. The duo begin with the unmistakable humming frequencies of the instrument and gradually introduce dissonant tones to create a dynamic acoustic field of standing waves, cyclical beat patterns and peering vibrations. Hopefully, this beautiful

document of Holterrach's instrument will be the first of many.

## DOUG HAIRE REMOVED AND HAUNTED BANG KUNG REMIX CD

Doug Haire's *Removed And Haunted* is symptomatic of a problem specific to field recordings and phonographs. With a huge archive of minimalist and DAI recordings of their disposal, yet without any conceptual framework to guide them, it has been a far too common practice of these artists to collage their favourite bits into a wandering construction of sounds from around the world, exclaiming, "Listen to all the cool places I've been!" Despite the immaculate techniques and dreamy production that Haire applies to his field recordings of Los Vegas slot machines, Islamic calls to prayer and microtunes that float across the stereo field, the resulting lodge-podge feels like an excuse to justify trips to each exotic location. This is a far cry from Haire's charming and poetic meditation on the sound ecology of highway rest stops heard on his *Western American Voyages*.

## GREG KELLEY I DON'T WANT TO LIVE FOREVER GAMERBY LITTLE ENVOYER CD

Massachusetts based experimental turnspike Greg Kelley built as the Minister of Fanfare for the Kingdoms of Elfgard Vargaland: no surprise, then, to find Greg Elfgard writing the liner notes for Kelley's ode to the ugliness of tape hiss and corroded noise. But what *Elfgard's* earnest absurdities have to do with Kelley's antiquated methodology of hand-spliced tape edits is anyone's guess. For more telling is the citation of Kelley's influences, which include Henry James, Walter Marchetti, AMM and MBV. Kelley explores uneasy, fear shards of bump and spring clam into microscapes, maintaining his prosaic squared quality throughout the entire 30 minute composition. The album begins and ends with cycling repetitions of klings, busses and bleats, all punctuated by gated silences that make the noises all the more aggressive and terrifying. While the middle ten minute chunk extends a gay trip into an acoustic noir.

## ANDREY KIRITCHENKO TRUE DELUSION NOSODUO-SPIRAXI CD

Ukrainian electronic musician Andrey Kiritchenko conceived of *True Delusion* as an album exploring the harmonic overtones of guitar and piano. While these instruments do provide a musical and emotional framework, Kiritchenko's album is much more about the abstraction of these elements alongside commonplace incidental sounds, quiet rubbings and field recordings of domesticity in fact, Kiritchenko is not a very good guitarist at all, never venturing beyond a chord or two, which he plucks with by Cooder's sense of space. But what he does with that empty space is capturing, as the quiet tinkling of cutlery, the

hushed rustling of a cat scratching its ear and the cracks under the floorboards appear delicate and magical due to Kiritchenko's care and subtle DSP tinkering. Once shifting to the piano, Kiritchenko's musicianship is far more confident, presenting a polyphony of cascading notes that he lets turn into a mass of ringing minimalism recalling the excellent *Worm* collaboration between Alvo Neta and Ryuski Sakamoto.

## DALE LLOYD SEMPER ALUWALINDOAR CD

Recapitulating the lowcost ethos previously established by Steve Roden and John Hack, Dale Lloyd manipulates delicate natural events and subtle field recordings for a poetic sensibility that privileges passages of silence and a Zenlike attention to sounds which might otherwise go unnoticed. This album is less of a cohesive body of work, more of a series of loosely related sketches that emerge from Lloyd's refined use of empty space. He runs everything through a variety of DSP techniques, resulting in a plasticity concealing the organic sounds of birds, insects, and closely observed gestures from old cars and other metallic found objects. The crackling ether from controlled feedback also grafts itself onto those natural elements, further distancing them from their original context. In all of their poetic restraint and well-accused detail, the sounds of *Semper* beg for a larger narrative context to be fully realized.

## BRENDAN MURRAY RESTING PLACES REDEMPTAL CD

Brendan Murray began this album as an extrapolation of his *underfoot* moments of his own mortality that emerged from seemingly innocuous periods of downtime, sloth and leisure. He's quick to point out that *Resting Places* is not to be construed as a requiem, but perhaps as a connected network of questions, reflections and deliberations upon those things it's clear from the onset that Murray owns a considerable debt for his aesthetic: if not conceptual sensibility to M. Behnken, *Harold* and *The Hafler Trio*, as he abstracts field recordings, manipulates small objects and stretches sound particles into suspended droplets in a similar manner to these artists. Murray's recordings exhibit a looseness in the bridging textures, blasts of superheated air and metallic clings, due to his decisions to mix most of the material down in live takes. However, given the weight of his subject matter, *Resting Places* would be better served with a patch to buff out the uneven moments that mar an otherwise fine effort.

## MIRROR VIKING BURIAL FOR A FRENCH CAR PLUNKITY PLUNK CD

The title alone should indicate a bit of a departure for Mirror, best known for their

impressionistic minimalism laced from oblique abstractions of sound. While this certainly doesn't sound anything like what Mirror's Christoph Heilmann had produced when fronting the abandoned project *HNAS* (an acronym which translates to No Noise On The Sofa), Heilmann and Andrew Chalk, invited a band of Scots into their cloistered world of resplendent introspection. Alvo Nelson, who recently gained notoriety for his live performance with Janelle, View contributor David Keenan and fellow Taster Pary Gary Lane, accepted Mirror's request, and offered an Eddie Peacock-inspired splatter of improvised sound within a thick haze of reverberation. The crescendo from this controlled metal beating needles in between abandoned passages built upon a two note alternation from sustained brass (French horn? Nordic horn? Car horn?). Like all Mirror records, the sublime sound of *Viking Burial* hovers with a stillness that provides many rich, elemental allusions to sea, fog, rain and air.

## MMORATH MOLECULAR KNOT PHASE ONE CLOUDMIRROR CD

*Molecular Knot Phase One* is an example of what the monadic sound artist mmorath describes as "Molecular Music." Less a conceptual project and more an open-ended procedure, *Molecular Music* seeks a dense superimposition of tiny sounds that are folded on top of each other into a macroscopic aggregate drone. For the 20 minute composition, mmorath began with a set of patterns that originated from a monochord and other stringed instruments played by both mmorath and Seth Reith. Despite the source material's rhythmic nature, the end result is various with a glacial affinity. Buried deep underneath the dense multiplicity of sound, a subtle sizzling degree whispers just on this side of perception. Alongside a distant mark or a quiet scrape, this is the only sound that counterpoints the sublime field of drones. Not surprisingly when a compositional shift is in order, it's these muted pinks that move to the foreground and coalesce into a slightly more agitated congregation of minuscule sounds.

## SPIRACLE IRIS CLOUDMIRROR CD

*Spiracle* is the work of the mysterious Hiroshi Kaga, whose previous output includes a couple of evocative compositions for dynamic total diffraction in small CD-R editions. *Heishi* doesn't give much away on its art, a short program published by the Swiss organization Cloudmirror that he may have some hand in. Tumbling layers of metallic creaking, grumbling and seeping are subject to variable amounts of electronic processing. As complex and dense as this post-industrial kollektionscape is, it's rather a calm, static dimension. *Spiracle* requires the multiple events within a humming series of swells, troughs and crescendos that collectively add up to an oceanic hypothesis. □

# Print Run

New music books: devoured, dissected, dissed



The Dregs don't work. Clock DVA

## BEATS WORKING FOR A LIVING: SHEFFIELD POPULAR MUSIC 1973-1984 MARTIN LILIKER

JAMA PSK £19.99

BY ROB YOUNG

Practically every city in Britain has a roster of musical hot carriers with appalling names. This exhaustive history of Sheffield's music scene is crisscrossed with names of markers that would keep The Who's 'Dodgy Group Names' chart filled up for months on end: Sexual Lotion, The Unkempt 4 Band, Quite Unnerving, A Major European Band... There's even an A-Z at the back mapping up such intrascenic as An Aline Heat (talking porn; neighbour died next door during practice), Bedroom Athletics (featuring Designers Republic founder Ian Anderson), Fish And Breadknife (Verbal inspired avventry featuring young Jamie Cocker), Melodicy (Clockwork Orange-obsessed skinheads), Naked Pymy Voles (Derek Bailey-influenced noise terrorists with Martin Archer), Prior To Intercourse (S&M duo 'your clitoris is our wanted reaction'), Phono Industries ('because Sindy & The Githens').

This is the nitty gritty of music making in Britain during the past 30 years or so: the graft behind the glamour that comes on in cheap warehouses, rehearsal flats and fest rooms, by

self-appointed local geniuses who rehearse in between signing on and getting loaded. Martin Liliker has been an active player and journalist in Sheffield since the 1970s. His style is conversational, vanguard, reading for too long in a single sitting is like being badgered by a pub corner fanatic. But his experience gives him access to many of the important voices: we hear first person accounts of the rise of Cabaret Voltaire, Dead Daughters (later The Human League), Vice Versa (ABC), Clock DVA and Pulp, as well as Peel show has-beens you thought you'd managed to forget such as Play Joy Hula, Des Thousand Voltaire and The Dance Society. Being a complete, unvarnished history of Sheffield music, over the lives of Del Leppard and The Constant Angels are given their own full-bodied chapters.

Many of Britain's cities might yield comparably amusing stories, but Sheffield has more than most. The Cab's rise has never been told with such a keen eye for prosaic detail, and is a good complement to the more critical stance in Simon Reynolds's *Rip It Up And Start Again*. In fact, there are several overlaps between these two books. Reynolds's chapter on Sheffield supplying the carnival takes lacking from Liliker's anecdotal approach. Liliker stiffs away the myth — you're given the hard slog, the empty pub gigs, the club-eared promoters, apologetic town

councilors and bungling policemen that line the route of many of these groups as they make their slow progress through often minuscule careers. By the chapter on the disastrous group *Antary* for an object lesson in heroic failure.

The opening 100 pages or so are by far the best, as Liliker demonstrates that the real beginnings of Sheffield's electronic pop period, the late 70s, can almost be seen as a kind of glam-rock masquerade on a student budget. When ABC's Martyn Ware says, 'We'd been through our own mini-punk revolution,' he's referring to *Mammoth*, the provocatively titled theatrical activity centre (backed by the city council in 1973), run by husband and wife Chris and Veronica White with a hippy called Justin, and which became a haven on school afternoons to almost the entire generation of youths who went on to form groups like Heaven 17, ABC, Cabaret Voltaire and Clock DVA. The opening pages are a litany of dead-end manual and shop jobs — future stars like Richard Nix and Stephen Mallinder, ABC's Martin Fry and Stephen Singletree, Human League's Phil Deley, etc. all scraping a living while looking to so-f, electronic synthesizers and dreams of pop stardom as an escape from the dreary day job and the destroyed their parents' wild down the mines or in the dead factories.

At times the book reads like a musical version

of *Crap Town*, liberally illustrated with photos of terminally obscure no-hopers, and Liliker is to be praised for such exhaustive picture research, as well as for the individual sections on significant venues, recording studios, shadowy producers and managers. The story ends at a prophetic juncture in the mid-80s with the establishment of FDN studios by MCA-signed funksters Chalko, the stage is set for the rise of Warp Records.

The 'oral history' provided by a strong funk culture in the late 70s is brought to the fore: names such as Paul Bower's Gun Rubber, Steve's Paper (by ABC's Steve Singletree), Modern Gnash (Martin Fry) and Death Row (Pulp's Russell Senior) were integral. There's a great deal of contemporary commentary lifted from NME, which Liliker calls 'the most authoritative' of the time. It was run by Martin Lacey, aka Martin X Russian. Coincidentally of course, Lacey now runs *Jama*, publisher of this book. If the book relies too much on accumulated detail, and would have benefited from a more doctrinaire slant drawing-together of threads, Liliker has done an impressive job in cataloguing every dark and depressing corner of the Sheffield scene. But a more complete history of Sheffield's second sound than this is difficult to imagine. It's more than just local music for local people. □

## PROPHETS OF THE HOOD: POLITICS AND POETICS IN HIPHOP

IMANI PERRY

CURT UNIVERSITY PRESS \$35 \$14.50

BY TOM MCNEILAND

Rap is a music formed of discourse about itself, about its location in culture, history and the world. This is one reason why studies of the art have been bound to frame their discussions within these terms. But *Prophets Of The Hood*, Imani Perry writes, departs from historical and sociological interpretations in order to focus on "the aesthetic, artistic, theoretical and ideological aspects of the music." This dislocation from social reality might seem questionable, but then rap's celebration of discourse and debate means that the world usually crashes into the work anyway. Perry identifies this discourse as a "realist" of sorts, and it's her central theme: she argues that after civil rights, black America has strayed for itself an identity neither bourgeois nor radical, one which instead represents an honest new singularity of self-image and lived reality, a hip-hop-borne unity of "sacred and profane."

But from the start of the first chapter, a consideration of hip-hop as an American phenomenon, Perry's skills of argument are revealed to be seriously flawed. Much reads as

if written off the top of the head. One section, appropriately enough an "Incomprehensibility", begins with Perry's assertion that "the general population" finds hip-hop lyrics incomprehensible, though no reference is offered to support this unusual claim: her rebuttal of the "federal charge is similarly empty of evidence. With her arguments so poorly structured (a section not only about the black-American family is, before very long, discussing sampling and copyright law), conclusions often arrive from nowhere, laden with concepts not previously broached. She sums up at one point, "it is the speed of late-capitalist production with the theatre of freedom in the post-civil rights era that facilitates nostalgic sensibilities without tradition." The syntax of that sentence is unacceptably poor, but the book is badly edited in general, being riddled with typographical and factual errors. Dates of recordings are particularly suspect, sometimes cited only to within ten years.

With Perry's argument and presentation in such disarray, the advertised claim to be attending to rap's thematic and aesthetic qualities is dependent on the author's analyses of the music, or, in practice, its lyrics. A comprehensive survey of rap lyrics might come to distinguish the trope from the singular, but Perry is selective, concentrating on her favourites (Joni J, Lil' Kim,

Biggie Smalls). A detailed study of exceptional figures might uncover the interplay of genre structures and artistic agency, but she is not interested in exploring the polyrhythmic invention of a Busta Rhymes, or the cultic time and tense of an MF Doom. Instead, the author simply restates her impressionistic examples in plain English, patronising both rapper and reader, or else grants them analyses that are terminally superficial ("southern music is music of joy and pain"). Never considered are the problems of textualisation and the ways in which transcribed lyrics lose meanings apparent in performance.

Perry's tone is often condescending. "According to the news," she writes, "gangsta rap was bad." But her analyses of gangsta's complex interrelation of interests extends no further than to suggest that the form offered a voice to those dismissed on tabloid TV. The constant reiteration of this idea, sometimes buttressed with glib borrowings like "cultural hegemony", ignores the complexity of both rapper and record companies in banking new forms of wealth within a context of tragic poverty. The process is ably described by Ethne Quinn in *Nuthin' But A G-Thing*. Quinn and Perry's volumes, published almost simultaneously, together represent the wild variation in quality of hip-hop's nascent scholarship.

It's for Perry's easy advocacy that star

academics Cornel West and Michael Eric Dyson congratulate her in their cover blurb. But the author simply slips through issues of moral culpability, a finger of blame always pointing at "hegemony". Perhaps mindful of the rule of Biggie and Tupac, she writes that hip-hop's geographical affinities are media-generated and nothing more, as if fundamentalism hadn't been central to the culture since its earliest days; any messianism in rap is down to rapper's feelings of powerlessness in the face of white masculine industry influence.

This Panglossian will to miss the point finds its most absurd expression in a discussion of "Gn And Juice"-type lyrics, scornily cited, which describe drunken, blunted days whiled away in front of video games. Rather than consider what such words say about black unemployment and post-civil rights disengagement, Perry's sole observation is that the games' dramatic despite interaction presents a basic element of African-American recreational practice.

The author's stated intention to move away from socioeconomic interpretations of hip-hop is to be respected, in theory at least. But here is a complete abdication of critical responsibility. Perry's cheerleading undermines her own concept of "realism"—an embrace of candour and contradiction that can only be rooted in material reality. □

## SEARCHING FOR THE SOUND: MY LIFE WITH THE GRATEFUL DEAD

PHIL LEASH

LITTLE BROWN HBK \$25 \$9.95

BY SAMANTHA BROWN

In *Grateful Dead* (and, the Phil Zone has many meanings. Ironically, it's where The Dead's more noted live, unrehearsed of bassist Phil Leash's singular approach to rhythm and song experimentation, positioned themselves for the group's marathon sets, more poetically, it's the far flung space into which Leash, largely in collusion with drummers Mickey Hart and Bill Newman, made habitually lead the rest of the group when they returned after a break for their second or third set. On good nights, then, the Phil Zone is where The Dead's most exploratory journeys began.

Not that Leash would claim credit for it in *Searching For The Sound*, his candidly written yet disarmingly modest autobiography, in other books about the group, particularly ex-manager Rick Scully's scintillatingly entertaining account of

his life with The Dead, he can come over as somewhat haughty and distant. That distance is very quickly erased by the evident warmth Leash expresses here for his colleagues of 30 years' standing.

Leash's lofty reputation in part stems from his academic role into a group otherwise grounded in American roots music. While The Dead's maturing faces, guitarists Jerry Garcia and Bob Weir, and keyboardists player Ron "Pigpen" McKernan were honing up folk, blues, bluegrass and jug music, Leash was learning trumpet and studying composition under Luciano Berio. When he later accepted Garcia's invitation to pick up bass and join the group, he considerably expanded their musical base with his knowledge of the European and American avant garde. Even so, it's doubtful that his colleagues' smothered their LSD experiences at Ken Kesey's Miss Terkins, where The Dead were the house band, with references to John Cage and Karlheinz Stockhausen. He writes, "We had already begun experimenting with feedback (extremely loud, distorted tones wrenched from

the speakers by electromagnetic fields of the pickup, speaker and amplifier), and one of our favourite tricks became fading down to a 60-cycle hum (normally the base of a musician's existence) and using that as our fundamental tone to generate harmonic music." To which he appends the footnote "We later learned that this approach was a fundamental tenet of John Cage's work—see his Imaginary Landscape No. 4 or one with Fontana Mix, also the electronic works of Stockhausen..."

This is the spirit that Leash brought to The Dead's second and arguably greatest album *Andrew Of The Sun*, with its multiple duos of live performances and musique concrete elements, constructed with the aid of keyboardist Tom Constanten and the full complexity of Garcia, who sought to "max the album for the hallucinations". He rightly devotes a good two thirds of his book to The Dead's most experimental psychedelic periods, he's strong yet disingenuous about the group's utopian indulgence of LSD and the head culture blossoming around San Francisco's Haight

district, dropping the heartbreaking hindsight that the group failed to foresee the toll the drugs would take on their music and friendships from what they could see happening all around them in San Francisco in the late 60s.

But, as he also acknowledges, the music would have been gotten so far out there without acid. By the 80s Leash's choice poison was alcohol, for which he later would eventually pay the price. As The Dead got bigger throughout that decade and the 90s up to Garcia's death in 1995, the story gets a whole lot grimmer, but right to the end Leash recalls redemptive musical attempts to alleviate the darkening tone.

It's a pity the book doesn't throw a little more light on The Dead's dalliances with Constanten and, later, electroacoustic composer Ned Lagin in the early 70s, when he oversaw the recording and release of *Seasons on The Road* on some shrunken label. But the anecdote of Leash taking his Dead colleagues to see a run of Wagner's *Ring cycle*, when Garcia's snoring at one point threatened to drown out the orchestra, is definitely one for the Phil Zone. □

# Cross Platform

Sound in other media. This month: Jason Weiss meets surfer, lifeguard and longtime improvising performance painter Norton Wisdom



Left: Improv artist Norton Wisdom's painting *Trumper Crowd*. Right: Live brushwork with event jazz group Banyan

Audiences seldom know what to expect: alongside the instruments on stage stands a large backlit opaque screen, ringed by paint cans, pots, brushes, squeegees and rags. At once, a man with dark blond curls wearing a white jumpsuit bounds out to take up his tools, listens to the first sounds emerge, and begins to paint. Thick wavy lines gather as a patch of sea, to spring up like a jet of wild hair on a bare-bosomed goddess and, as the pulse of the music quickens, she is embracing a man, both astride a horse, beneath a small winged cupid who hovers with his arrow. The painter prowls around, pulling images from inside his images—snakes, dragons, angels, gods, monkeys and alligators—until the music flies along without him and he stops to reconsider. Applying his hands directly to the surface, he erases the picture to prepare a new ground, or with his squeegees parts the waves of paint, wiping the screen clean. "The screen is translucent, usually fibreglass," performance painter Norton Wisdom explains. "If firegliss is unavailable, I use windows and glass doors, whatever is on hand. The idea is to create a stained glass window effect. The paint is water based, operative work is cheap and safe and can be cleaned up without evidence that there was ever a painter on stage. Since art supplies on tour in the backwaters of places like Minnesota and North Dakota are questionable at best, I have learned to be able to go into a gas station and a drugstore and come out with materials to do a gig."

Painting and music, of course, share a common impulse, as close as the eye and the ear: both organize elements of line, colour, rhythm. But only in the mid-20th century did the disciplines begin to really overlap, due to the rise of abstraction in one and improvisation in the other. The action painters (Pollock, Kline, de Kooning) who frequented New York jazz clubs drew as the music's uncompromising spontaneity as Thelonious Monk in executing their own work. In France, Yves Klein unified the performance of both with models producing his monochrome body-paint paintings while an orchestra played his one chord *Monotone* Symphony. Elsewhere, Fluxus artist Nam June Paik was abandoning early efforts as a composer to incorporate music performance as a foundation in his video installations. When musician and artist were

the same person, the roles usually alternated. Painter Larry Rivers began as a jazz saxophonist, but only performed occasionally after becoming an art star. For 40 years, Michael Snow has carried on two mostly parallel careers as improvising pianist and visual artist. But the act of painting as a performance while musicians improvise in front of an audience is far less common. At 57, Wisdom has remained true to the nature of his practice over the years. "The first time I painted with live music was in 1964," he says, "at my high school, when The Doors were playing at our junior dance. I was going to Chinoards Art School at night then and was very much into the Beat scene, which was all about freedom from old academic ideas."

A native of Los Angeles and lifelong surfer, before finishing art school he secured an ideal civil service job: as a lifeguard on the beaches of Malibu, retiring just a year ago he was among the real-life inspirations for *Baywatch*. During that time, he developed an obsessive abstract format in his studio painting that has proved fruitful to this day: four trapezoids framing a door-like center provided a sculptural visual support for endless possibilities of expression. But on a trip to Berlin in 1980 he took that obsession outside when he decided, in protest, to paint his trapezoids on a section of the Berlin Wall; he was detained and then deported. Looking to maintain that sense of risk in his art, he soon joined keyboard/synthplayer Zorn Johnson and saxophonist Eddie "Snakepit" Edwards to do live painting performances as the group Pencil in pink cutouts and jazz bars around LA.

It was at one such gig, at a biker bar in Venice, that guitarist and current Wilco member Neil Cline first saw Wisdom, leading to many collaborations. This line of practice before an audience evolved differently from his studio work, in what might be termed a figurative expressionism, as he built up his own iconography with a fluid capacity for constant metamorphoses. Wisdom and Cline first performed together in the early 1990s; later, when Cline was directing the New Music Mondays series at the Alligator Lounge in Santa Monica during the mid-1990s, Wisdom got to paint with various musicians, including Cline's trio. Later, Cline brought him to paint with Banyan, the jazz rock group led by drummer

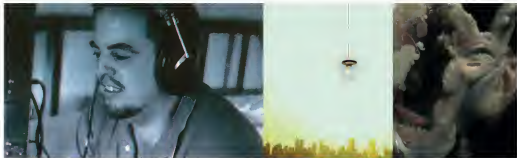
Stephen Perkins (Jane's Addiction) that also includes Minuteman Mike Watt and trumpeter Wilitte Waldman. Wisdom became their frequent collaborator, performing all over the United States.

Maybe his decades as a lifeguard prepared him, but the fact remains that Wisdom is fearless, and his painting in both modes (live and studio) wins admirers at every turn—galleries and museums have taken interest in him—though he resists the courtship dance of the art market. Among his more unusual collaborators over the years are The Los Angeles Philharmonic, Butoh dancers in Japan, and The National Bamboo Orchestra in a limestone grotto in Bali, in addition to working with vinyl musicians as Charles Owens, Badal Roy, Rob Wasserman, Daniel Lanois, Ivan Neville, George Clinton, Beck, Jagjaguars and Lili Haydn.

Though Wisdom somehow thrives in nearly every musical setting, Cline prefers to take matters further, to work one on one in a way that is fully collaborative. They formed a duo, Stained Radiance, as a more unified project, which continues to perform around LA. "What he does," says Cline, "is simultaneously on his own track and in the moment, and it all works together." Curiously, for a long time these paintings shared an essential quality of improvised music, in that they were ephemeral; they existed only for that evening and he would wash them down after the gig. A few years ago, he started photographing them to document the work; he has even been known to rework them for gallery shows.

Regarding their performances as a duo, Cline has occasionally tried to direct him in tone or mood, but mostly he tends to work off what emerges in the painting. Wisdom for his part appreciates Cline's suppleness and adaptability as especially suited to the overall dynamic of such work. "The nature of the music directs the outcome of my painting," he concludes. "I stay out of the way and let the music paint my pictures, and I am very fortunate to work with this level of musicians. So once the event starts, it has a life of its own." □ Norton Wisdom performs weekly in LA with ambient surf group Magic Box, and is appearing with Banyan at the Monterey Jazz Festival in September. More information and images at [www.nortonwisdom.com](http://www.nortonwisdom.com)





Left: A young Alan Lomax in *Lomax The Songhunter*. Centre: Still from Oliver Lyons's *Traces Of An Afternoon* DVD. Right: Chris Cunningham's *Rubber Johnny*

## LOMAX THE SONGHUNTER

ROGER KAPPEL'S DIRECTOR'S 2004, 66 MIN  
BY DEREK WALMSLEY

Much as Alan Lomax felt a fervent desire to record folk musics of the world before they were crushed by cultural homogenisation, Roger Kappel's film attempts to preserve the story of this extraordinary curator as he entered the autumn of his life. The film combines dialogue, archive footage and journal entries, and fell together in a somewhat makeshift manner which ultimately proved profoundly significant. When visiting Lomax in his Florida home in 2002, the songhunter was too disabled by his stroke to discuss his work. "He was unable to respond to my questions — I had to find out some other way", explains Kappel, so instead he drove through the Scottish Hebrides, Spain and Italy with camera and equipment, much as his subject had done 50 years ago, substituting Lomax's keen ear with a camera's calm eye.

Appointed acting curator to the Library of Congress's Archive of American Folk Song by his father John in 1937, Alan Lomax was the first to record Leadbelly and Muddy Waters. After leaving the archive, he extended his curating activities to Europe, where he found distant roots of blues music and work songs. Kappel's journey starts in the sea-locked Hebrides islands, west of mainland Scotland, where Lomax recorded walking songs — improvised to the rhythm while beaded was beaten to make it tougher, these work songs were suffused with lyrics sung by fishermen's wives. They have a looseness and nobility to rival the blues. Kappel's encounter with Flora MacNeill embraces a cappella music of a more reflective bent — ghostly and graceful Gaelic ballads, described by Lomax as the music that influenced Burns.

"Culture is all we have," argues Lomax in archive footage, and the most startling moments of the filmed travels are in giving glimpses of social activities to which music was a focal point. When ageing men and women in remote Spanish and Italian villages begin impromptu

dancing for the camera, or a schoolteacher leads her pupils in a traditional song, it's hard to know whether we're watching reminiscence, re-enactment for the camera, or a reawakening of communal customs.

Oral accounts of the young Lomax, and even some of the photos, suggest an energy and invention that compares to Orson Welles as he gently but confidently coaxed stunning performances from laymen anglers and players. An organisational dynamo and a social catalyst (introducing live broadcasts with a cheer "we're having a party inside, so come on in"), Lomax embraced the communicative possibilities of technology even as he feared its industrial effect. Sadly the film reports no news of Lomax's global jubilee, a multimedia project, seemingly on ice since his death in 2002, and the film ends with the more modest achievement of a disk to release a further 150 albums' worth of material in the Lomax archives. But by re-establishing a connection with music that is in danger of slipping from the collective memory, the film achieves its main aesthetic goal — one which the late Alan Lomax would be proud of.

## OLIVER LYONS TRACES OF AN AFTERNOON

COLLECTIVE'S DVD  
BY BRIAN MARLEY

Oliver Lyons is one of the new breed of artists who make no real distinction between visual images and musical ones, at least in terms of prioritising one over the other. Audio supports video in his work without in any way being subordinate to it, and vice versa. Having graduated in music composition from City University, New York, Lyons took additional courses at both the School of Visual Arts and Juilliard. During the last few years he's written scores for dance, made site-specific work and had his pieces screened in various cities around the world. *Traces Of An Afternoon*, his first commercial release, in any medium, consists of ten short *AV* adventures. Four tasks is, as the title

suggests, a short series of merged tracking shots, speeded up, mostly blurred beyond recognition, perfectly complemented by fluctuating electronic music loops. The piece plays on the idea of pattern instability — images moving so fast they almost seem to be static. A different approach to pattern is pursued in *Still Progression*, a work deriving from a collaboration that Lyons undertook in 2004 with the artist Aaron Heiser. But the very best of the pieces here, *Twins, Point and Character*, are more wide ranging in their image content and much less schematic. *Character*, in particular, makes something truly haunting out of deconstructed film clips of Audrey Hepburn, taken from the 1963 *Hepburn* and Cary Grant romance/comedy/thriller of the same name. Lyons's use of broken and staggered repetition lays stress on inconsistency and anxiety, the unfathomable loss of memory. These clip *vs* moments when life seems almost to be dreaming itself. Using other quite precise fragments of found and appropriated sound and images, as well as electronic composition and footage he has shot in the streets and in public buildings, Lyons creates an audio-visual poetry that is at times quite extraordinary.

## RUBBER JOHNNY

CHAS CUNNINGHAM (JANE BONE) 2006, 6 MIN  
WARP FILMS DVD + BOOK

BY DAVID STUBBS

With a running time of just six minutes ten seconds, it's arguable whether *Rubber Johnny* qualifies as a film or simply a music video. It actually started life as a promotional item for The Aphex Twins' "Drunk". The simple difference here, however, is that the music is subordinate to the images — the Aphex soundtrack is serviceable, fast-cut electronics but out of his middle drawer.

When discussing his work, moreover, Cunningham is more liable to talk about the mechanics than in the context, perhaps reflecting his background as an FX sculptor. To listen to him, you might imagine that the film was

little more than a fraught but challenging exercise in synchronising visuals with high-bpm sound. So, what is it? Well, *Rubber Johnny* is the story of a wheelchair-bound but shipshapely child (played by Cunningham himself) who, mysteriously locked away in a dark closet, must find ways of generating his own entertainment, engaging in a sort of obsessive physical exchange with laser shafts generated by the Aphex music, his head bulging, his body sagging, contorting and mutating as he does so. The only witness to his antics is an anxious-looking adult female with neon eyes. Occasionally, a door will open as the actress and Johnny will flop back into his wheelchair as a early bath of light floods the room and the outside views of his keepsake/ captain's mangle (microphones, before the portal slams shut and Johnny resumes his ad hoc engineering in his face splitting against the very gears of the camera and breaking up like wet meat. It's also absolutely thrilling, delectable stuff (one stanza reads the word 'bonkers'), impacting hard at an obscure, visceral and emotional level, as the tradition of his work with Chris Morris and previous Aphex videos like 1997's "Come To Daddy".

One hesitates, but is tempted, to get a bit cerebral on *Rubber Johnny*, although it may be that such thoughts belong in the privacy of the head of each individual viewer. For what it's worth, I found intimations of Francis Bacon, of human flesh in a tortuous state, trying to break out of the chrysalis of this figurative 'meat' into the abstract. Kubrick's 2001, for some reason — the hyperkinetic space sequence, coupled with lives lived and spent at exaggerated speed (Cunningham had previously worked with Kubrick). The opening sequence of *Rubber Johnny*, too, peaks, like much of Cunningham's work, at an overexposed but tender nerve. It features a heavily grainy image of an almost fetal, fetal baby Johnny reclining the patient persuasions of his well-spoken father. It's hard, then, not to speculate on *Rubber Johnny* as some sort of



Foley effects by Marko Grottel (left), with Hope Davis, Peter Onorato and Meryl Streep in *Theater Of The New Ear*

capsule-sized metaphor for the human condition. Or maybe it's just supposed to be fun — serious, unmitigated fun.

Certainly, it bumps up against taboos — the accompanying 42-page booklet in particular, with its drawings, stills and visual digressions from the film, including cartooned, photo-shopped images of bodies with heads replaced by genitals, which Werp's Italian printers refused to work on when they clasped eyes on it. As it happens, the book is a diverting but not absolutely necessary appendage. Rubber Johnny is best taken at speed, rather than pored over

## THEATER OF THE NEW EAR LONDON ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL, UK

BY ROB YOUNG

The Foley artist is an essential but invisible presence in cinema, ever since the birth of talkies — or anything involving overlapping sound onto celluloid. What is a Foley artist (sound effects guy) brings to the film is the flesh touch of magic that can make a slap on the cheek turn into a punishing crunch, or footsteps echo into Manhattan alleyways. You could almost imagine a film being nothing without its psychosomatic magician. On this startlingly glamorous evening, we get to see the Foley artist out: in the ocean, blinning in the light. Marko Grottel, a New Yorker who also works as a magician, did the sound effects on each Hollywood picture as the Coen Brothers' *Barton Fink*, *The Big Lebowski*, *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* and Michel Gondry's recent *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, and tonight he was divine stage doing his thing at the Royal Festival Hall, almost upstaging everyone else taking part in this semi-staged reading of radio plays by the Coens and Charlie Kaufman. And that's no mean feat, when on stage you have Hollywood regulars Meryl Streep, John Goodman, Steve Buscemi, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Hope Davis and Peter Onorato. Oh, and the Coen's music director/composer of choice, Carter Burwell (whose gigantic filmography also includes *Three Kings* and *Adaptation* among numerous others), conducting

the score played by The Parable Band, a small electric and acoustic ensemble.

Maximum concentration is required to keep pace with *Sawbones*, a half-hour radio piece scripted by the Coens, which swings between a housewife culling with a vacuum salesman, her lame husband (Goodman in fine fettle), and a third group of actors playing out a 1950s TV Western series as a perpetual backdrop to the other scenarios. It's a study showpiece piece, but gives a character actor like Buscemi few went for his hickville hamming. It also sharpens the mental palate to adapt to this mode of presentation, where the non visual component of radio, which allows the imagination to fill the blank, is replaced by all the workings of it — actors with scripts, a sound effects guy hovering almost casually away.

With his screenplay for *Being John Malkovich*, *Adaptation* and *Human Nature*, Charlie Kaufman declared himself a master manipulator of appearance and reality, applying sleight-of-hand to artifice and illusion, and his hour-long piece *Hope Davis/The Theater* was a tour de force written, says the programme, in 1997 (although even this turns out to be an unreliable fact, woven into the illusion). Without leaving their stools, one minute the actors are reading parts that cast them as audience members commenting on the actors preparing to begin the show, the next they are back to being themselves as actors, maturing about the audience before launching into the performance — only for Hope Davis, as audience member, to interrupt because her mobile is ringing. Streep is then voicing her mother on the other end of the phone, and immediately back to being... Meryl Streep, the actor, interrupting her own performance to bawl out Hope Davis as the audience member.

And so it goes, flipping back and forth, with beautiful touches as Kaufman weaves the actors as characters — Streep at one point breaking off to rant at the crowd about lapsing audience members, playing herself as pompous, self-absorbed and brassy Hollywood maven. All the while, Carter Burwell is conducting with a light touch — you suspect coordinating the whole —

as the music, Foley and script are tightly meshed together and play out like an on-the-dime score by Carl Stalling or John Zorn. Barwell teamed at Columbia-Princeton with electronic/tape composer Vladimir Ussachevsky. While his own scores are often more conventionally constructed, his signature sounds — he's sworn to the Coens for life — require scalpel-sharp application. The *Parable Band* keeps up a raucous NYC blues shuffle behind the talk, and Grottel leaps about like *Meathead's* Phil Britt, mixing the sound of a creaking elevator by leaning on a rusty iron canister, then putting on women's shoes to make footsteps on a damp slate. Hard to outdo the likes of Meryl Streep, but tonight the show belonged to the Foley.

## UMBRELLAS IN THE SUN: A CREPUSCULE/FACTORY BENELUX DVD 1979-1987

UM DVD

BY SIMON REYNOLDS

Founded in Brussels at the dawn of the 1980s, Les Disques Du Crépuscule was operated by a clutch of Belgian aesthetes suffering from a clutch of Belgian ailments with Factory Records. They swiftly formed an alliance with their Manchester idols and jointly released records by the likes of A Certain Ratio in the Low Countries (hence Factory Benelux). Now the equally fast-obsessed music label (UM — not content with echoing the Belgian tempo in its very name, an acronym for Les Temps Modernes — is paying tribute with this splendid DVD of promos and live footage of Crépuscule/Benelux acts. Vintage videos can be embarrassingly dated, but the bulk of the material on *Umbrellas* gives off a sense of "limited means, effectively used".

ACR's "Back To The Start" is a case in point, juxtaposing marvellously handled film of the group shaking their stuff in a field after regittal with scenes of children dancing on the edge of an indoor swimming pool. The ashrow lighting, edgy engulfed shots, and strange bodily gymnastics perfectly suit the group's dislocated disco, as punctured percussion draped with the bird-like wail vocal: pitter of Martha Wilson.

Scottish Postcard group Josef K — like ACR, Northern punk-funkers with cropped hair and very clean ears — appear here performing "Sorry For Laughing" on a television pop show. The simple but clever twist is that the TV footage miserably appears projected, bluescreen-style, onto a lump of gas nestling on a girl's bare stomach. Manipulating the gala, she demands the images of the group as they bob on her belly.

On a purely sonic level, *Umbrellas*' highlight is Cabaret Voltaire's "Suggin' For Jesus", the lead track off 1981's *Three Crepuscule Tracks EP* (arguably the group's peak). Laced with American televangelist prattle, the entrancing Karok funk groove is accompanied by light-flickered images of the gaps forming their synths and, in Richard H Kirk's case, scorching away at a wick. Close behind "Suggin'" is the exquisitely plangent

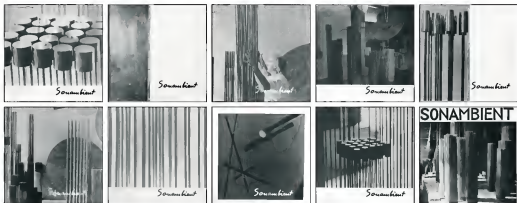
threnody for Ian Curtis that is *The Duvet*, CCR's "Never Known" (although, for mystifying reasons, the track is here titled "Marie Louise Gaudere"). With Vini Reilly generating such agonising beauty of sound, all that's required is the sparest of visuals, and that's what we get: the "missing boy" alone in a deserted public park at twilight, crossing the guitar strings with his fingertips. In scanty terms, though, the gems here comprise the fabulous monochrome footage of Malo's onstage performance "White Sky White Sea".

Les Disques' "Unloub Duvet", also live, but juxtaposed with Ernst Torgler's footage (what looks like France seen from a moving train), and the 23-minute film of a performance by Belgian funksters Marnie juxtaposed with atypical microscopic visuals. Most known for the existentialist cult of "Life In Reverse", Marnie's entire aesthetic was based on the debut Benelux release, ACR's emaciated cover of "Shook Up".

This DVD goes somewhat near to ridding us of the under-the-glass-and-rubbed-in-80s phase of Factory output (the sub-Seds café blew some of *Nakoma*, anyone?) I don't think so). But overall *Umbrellas In The Sun* is a wonderful document that conveys Crépuscule's ultra-refined Euro-wake while also capturing a lost moment of art-pop pop inclusions. □

# The Inner Sleeve

Artwork selected this month by Keith Fullerton Whitman



## HARRY BERTOIA SONAMBIENT SOUNDING SCULPTURES SERIES SONAMBIENT 1986-92

DESIGN BY HARRY BERTOIA

In the purest sense, a successful record cover should rub your subconscious in a retail setting. For this reason I've chosen any number of Harry Bertoia's series of 11 Sonambient LPs. I don't remember when I uncovered my first — possibly in Emil Boule's RRR Records.

Back at the dawn of the 90s, these would pop up in the most unlikely places — their black and white covers fractionally too tall/wide, with a single low-contrast photo of machine shop affairs,

with just the handwritten word "Sonambient". The back covers offer nothing save for a repto of the A-side label (now cheap), a catalogue number, a scabbled Harstock reading "Bertoia". Absolutely dripping with mystery, although one gave some clue: a bald (ing) gardenian, thousand yard stare, hands askew just afoot of a tall batch of brass rods in mid-amination.

The genius of this layout lies in its reluctance to inform the prospective consumer of anything. Not that much more is revealed when you get on home: each record containing two sideling diris of dangniss, prime number harmonies, but in the shop it's certainly anyone's guess.

Flash forward: In 1996, I found myself in a

hotel room about 30 miles away from rural Bolly Philadelphia. Flipping through the yellow pages, I found a listing for a Bertoia studio, ring them up, verified that this was in fact the same Bertoia, had a chat with the proprietor (Harry's son Val), and scheduled a visit.

Val led me up a mountain where Harry's barn/studio still stood, corner to corner occupied with sound sculptures, a wall to wall array of unlabelled reel-to-reel tapes and a microphone still hung from the rafters.

As a student of the Sonambients, needless to say it was a wholly surreal experience to stand amid these majestic constructs, pristine after all these years. While I was strictly forbidden from

touching them, Val gave a succinct demo of each before spontaneously launching into a performance of his one-man play *Mama MIA* (a lamentably: *Mama; Made In America*), which took him farther and deeper into the woods where I could hear his pained 'primal scream therapy as astral projection', quieter and quieter with each outburst, way off in the distance, until finally out of earshot entirely.

Roughly one mile away in hasty mood, I could barely make out last's figure in the dust trail, hands waving as I made my descent. □  
Keith Fullerton Whitman aka Hushchild is a musician and keeper of the Entschuldigjen label [www.keithfullertonwhitman.com](http://www.keithfullertonwhitman.com)

## Go To:

There is a image on *Plot Ou Jour* ([www.plotoujour.co.uk](http://www.plotoujour.co.uk)). Matthew Herbert's site for his new faecile album (reviewed on page 52), showing the artist holding a gigantic microphone up to a tiny shivering chicken alone on a warehouse floor, as if to record an iniquitous rant regarding the current conditions of its battery farm home. *Plot Ou Jour* is a highly politicised song inquiry into the food we eat. "The album will include tracks made from a grain of sugar, 30,000 chickens, a salmon farm, the sewers below London and water", the site explains. If that inspires you to become a field recorder, as an art in itself or as sample fodder, you could do even better by checking out [phenography.org](http://phenography.org).

The site supplies everything you need to know about field recording, with a beginner's guide and gear reviews; it also acts as a site where phenographers can present themselves and their work to the world. Growing out of a mailing list on the subject, the community aspect

of the site is strong, and it even features an A-Z of people working in this area, complete with contact information. A compilation section contains select MP3s and details of collaborations arranged by the site's founder, and a writing section lists essays on the art of recording sound. Photographer Aaron Nim is one member, whose site *The Quiet American* ([www.quietamerican.org](http://www.quietamerican.org)) is anything but soundless. The site is jam-packed with location recordings, from around his home in San Francisco as well as his travels (mainly Vietnam).

Each weekday, *Pulse Of The Planet* ([pulseplanet.nationalgeographic.com](http://pulseplanet.nationalgeographic.com)) provides its listeners with a two-minute sound portrait of Earth, tracking the rhythms of nature and culture worldwide and blending interviews and natural sound. Apparently broadcast over 300 public and commercial stations around the world, as well as on Voice Of America and the Armed Forces Radio Network, Jim Metzner's

show is apparently heard by millions. Check the archives to hear mating Galapagos for scallions, a pack of African naked mole rats or voracious moths. *Sonda* ([www.sonda.org/e\\_web\\_sonda/e\\_Smeponds.html](http://www.sonda.org/e_web_sonda/e_Smeponds.html)) gives a rather stark to phenography than by an artist collective. This project aims to develop a series of modifications from an urban sound recorded in Barcelona. The sound will "travel around the world in order to be modified in all possible ways: distorted, cropped, mixed, de-fragmented". The makers invite anyone to download the sound, modify it, and spread it again, marking where you live on a map. The project curators point out that the use of additional instruments is forbidden, making it easier, they say, to monitor the sound's transformation from its original sound. The finished project will be shown at Barcelona's Zeppelin Festival between 19-22 October later this year.

ANNE HILDE RESEY



# On Location

Live and kicking: festivals, concerts, events in the flesh



## MUSIC LOVERS' FIELD COMPANION

### GATEHEAD SAGE

UK

BY ANDY HAMILTON

**MUSIC LOVERS' Field Companion**, its title taken from the last piece in John Cage's book *Silence*, is the kind of event that isn't meant to happen in North East England. The opening of the Sage Gateshead has made it possible, and curator Barry Exton has gathered the kind of wide-eyed live-up he puts together for his Glasgow *Instal* event — many artists have never before been seen in the country, let alone the region. The festival opens with an extreme gesture of violence, and a warning of things to come — Yoko Kaseki's five-minute piece *Intro 1*. The former leader of Taj Mahal Travellers, composer and mixed-media artist betrays his Rausa connections with *Intro 2* — the "instruction score" for the piece was written in the movement's highly Kaseki with a large sheet of white paper, which he wraps with marionette force around the standing mic. After struggling for a couple of minutes to compress it — the sounds are thunderous — he stands back to let it quietly uncompress for a few minutes more.

From five minutes to four hours: this is apparently the first time multi-instrumentalist Keiji Haino has staged his one-man-orchestra spectacular, *Secret Of Mio*, outside Japan. Haino performs from a collection of 40 exotic instruments, and a large spread of let it be brought onstage, including whistles, cymbal, heater and trumpet, various percussion and woodwind. Inebrially there's a low voice from the back of the

auditorium. It turns out it's the second man playing the lights person, who can't see Haino (he's behind a screen). When he begins, the guitars are outstrung, with outstrung guitar and frenzied vocals, and rarely does Haino let up — carapace were distributed at the start and it's good to know that Haino wears them too. The sound system is superb, though, delivering total clarity if you can take the volume unimpeded. The whole performance shows how the almost musicality of a master player is expressed through instruments on which they're relatively unskilled.

The following evening sees a star performance by Kazuo Imai on nylon-strung acoustic guitar. He begins with the instrument flat, treating it with various preparations, before moving into whirling improv high-energy, apparently trying to wear himself around it. His techniques here, and on his few solo recordings such as *Soloists* on PSF, develop Derek Bailey's approach, and the British guitar is clearly a point of critical comparison. But Imai begins his free jazz improv career as a student of the legendary Masayuki Takayanagi — apparently an intense relationship from which he found it hard to break free — and also guested with Kaseki's Taj Mahal Travellers. On the occasion, Imai's performance is undeniably involving, but perhaps rather unimpressive.

From free improvisation to distorted blues/folk/riffism — Imai sings/singer-junkies (also Shering R Smith) give an extraordinary guitar/vocal performance with the UK's Richard Young on bass and Alex Nelson on drums. It's amazing to think that in a career of 25 years and over 40 albums, this is only his second live performance, and the first to be advertised in advance — it was a condition of his surprise appearance at 2004's *Instal* that he was

incognito, even Chased, one of the few to get something close to an interview with Smith, reported him as saying in 1980 that he had "no friends", which might account for the consistent bleakness of his material. "You Hurt Me Bad" is one of the happier tunes; another charts the activities of a family-feline. Gore, apocalypse and despair are the hallmarks of Imai's unique, lowing speech-singing. Nelson's intelligence, the jazz-influenced drumming, is an ideal foil for the dragging pulse which Imai's summits up, with Young's unobtrusive on bass. The rumour mid-sounding him has suggested among other things that the guitarist's many privately pressed recordings were a form of self-therapy. Certainly they won't be therapeutic for anyone else, but this is a performance of raw power to live in the memory.

Boston-based trumpeter Greg Kelley and soprano saxophonist Ebba Rany make up *Impromptu* — here "lightful PER IGOTUS" — meaning the unseen through the many unknown. (It's a category Donald Rumsfeld massed out in his famous discussion of "known unknowns") In an interview with *Style* magazine, Rany commented that "as jazz musicians studied chords and scales, another type of improviser could study long forms, time sense, timbral variation." The duo have evidently studied sound material explorers from the field of contemporary composition such as Rapp, Lachenmann and Scarmis. It's a compelling set made up from the sounds of silence — mostly textures or near textures, bowings, scarpings and pulsings, delivered with penetrating exactness, though with an effect slightly marred by an overcast air conditioning system.

Sedg, Liza Ferns is suffering the ravages of chemotherapy and had to cancel. His last minute replacement is the impressive Chalmers

Paislane, playing a piece written 26 years ago for two pianos, he explains, inspired by his love of the change-ringing tradition of British church bells. Paislane has the rare opportunity of playing two pianos next to each other, which he finds compelling for acoustic and visual reasons — "They're like a pair of lions," he comments afterwards. The result is a less technically assured but more heartfelt kind of process: must their slower motion produces Paislane has a deep love of oddity too, though there's no question that their purpose is strictly musical. During his set they are amazed across the front of the stage, and as the pianist says later, while they are being packed into their red plastic subcase, "It's the animals that sing — without the animals, there's no music!"

Kaseki returns for *Catch-Alive 03*, a beautiful performance for electric violin, electronics and video. In complete contrast to *Intro 1*, this is a long and gently undulating piece, with Kaseki's violin in hypnotic sync with the rilling waves on the two video screens. The closest event is by Kaseki No Intention, a 30-minute work by guitarist Munehiro Naito and drummer Shoji Hane in their first performance outside Japan. "Yasaka" means "eternity, a frenzied, brutal, heroic, vicious," and this is a brutal display — not as loud as Haino though — of compellingly synthesized post-Hendrix power rock and free jazz. These are real improvisers borrowing from both genres to create structures of incoherence and power.

The Music Lovers' Field Companion was an ambitious project, and it was good to see sizeable audiences, many from far afield. The Sage's unusual Hall Two, cylindrical with a ground level and two tiers, was ideal for listening and moving around, and hopefully will host many Field Companions to come. □

Clockwise from top: Tsheringa Kaseki performs *Intro 1*; Chalmers Paislane; Munehiro Naito of Kaseki No Intention

## TORTOISE

### LONDON ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

UK

BY KEITH MOUNIE

After bellying through Tortoise's typically immaculate performance I suffer a critical panic attack. That's critical as in "critic", I'm not having a nervous breakdown or anything. But I do feel nervous, and for good reason. Here is a group that with some justification are considered to have been responsible for retooling rock music with a new set of weaponry in the 90s. It's not too much of an exaggeration to call them one of the single most influential rock ensembles of recent times, who somehow managed to liberate the form from its stultifying, percussive concerns by opening it up to a whole host of outside stimuli. But it was a quiet revolution, more a case of peering round its immovable obstacles than leaping over the statues, making it difficult to either to analyse their work or to be truly moved by it. And when I realise during tonight's show that I'm not sure exactly what I'm feeling about it all, well, that's when I start to panic. It's really difficult to write about Tortoise.

Let's get one thing straight: they are extremely good live, dissecting it all. But just as their music seems to slide and cut between these cracks they themselves helped open up in rock's rigid formations, one's response to it seems

simply mercurial. At various points in their set they are entralling, indignant, bombastic, tame, aloof, stoic, and then return within the same piece. And while it's a nice trick to be offered the chance to immerse oneself in 90 minutes' worth of superbly rendered instrumental music without it being spoiled by some whining, or hedging, or painfully aspired-to eclecticism with massiveness tensions, it is nevertheless a struggle to engage fully with Tortoise, to pinpoint the reasons why they continue to matter.

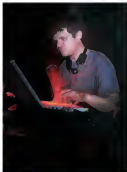
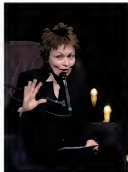
Certainly there are aspects of their performance that fail to convince. For a group who foregrounded bass guitar (initially as forcefully as anything in the "Nine Miles an Hour" and as their still astonishing debut album, its surprising how problematic the low end of their sound is tonight. Electronics, kick drums and Doug McConnell's booming dub lines get stuck together in a messy, doggy mush. This lack of bass definition thins the jazz percussion into vapidly sharp ravel, and Jeff Parker's other marly guitar embellishments frequently overblow the dark spectrum rather than round out the midrange. Inevitably, many of the imitations on which songs like Theirs "Ten Day Interval" and "Newsworld" from *Standards* depend for their impact are obscured in the blur. But as some straightforward pieces like the port-rock spy theme of "Orest" and the somber

frowned note without "Dot Eyes" (both from 2004's *It's All About You*), the lack of sonic variety actually works in the group's favour. The latter track shows some of the success potential of Congaline (live) trumpeter maestro Konono No 1, who were slated to support tonight but sadly failed to clear immigration.

The two-set percussive interplay of John McVie and Johnny Henson is quite spectacular. Their combined power and inventiveness make for a positively elastic groove, even on metrically tricky pieces like "Blackdog". The loyalty interludic Henson for some reason is not as good as he seems moving, but even the more insistent songs like "Seneca", with its devastatingly precise introductory distillation of Jimi Hendrix and Mitch Mitchell from Parker and the two drummers, still encourages a sense of somewhat detached admiration rather than generating the "Monoc" though significantly better than the version on *Standards*, nevertheless veers dangerously close to the academically just funk that their detritus have often accused them of positing.

Essentially the problem with Tortoise tonight — as with their recorded output post-*Archives* — has long been *How Now*. One, they fail to deliver on the promise that their early innovations

suggested. The further back they delve into their back catalogue is a no-nonsense nodding of their masterpiece "Eight" that focuses the group's original instrumental experiment of dub effects and tapework as essential components of its structural framework in favour of a more conventionally episodic musical arrangement. Similarly, the abrupt, adventurous changes of loss and nets that had them labelled as tasteless cold-shoulders by the more doth-erred or self-conscious of their critics are largely passed over tonight. Instead they display the same equally balanced avoidance of the overwrought gesture that has been a trademark of their music. They are not, by any means, brilliant craftsmen, but the unbreakable feeling remains that they haven't fully explored the territory that they liberated early in their career. Indeed, in many ways tonight's concert, good as it is, suggests more of a retreat. For a few moments at a time they display tantalising flashes of promise, of almost boundless potential a whisker away from being fulfilled. But for the most part, watching them is like watching a thoroughbred showrunner mauling yet another perfect round, effortlessly vaulting all the horses who are usually leading in a sweat. Worthy of great admiration to be sure, but wouldn't it be great to see those fences brutally ploughed into for once? □



Top row: Steve Stapleton and friends, Laurie Anderson, Duran Duran. Bottom row: Moritz Gieseler, Alessandro Alessandroni, Barbara Morgenstern & Robert Lippok

## MARKEB 05 BERLIN MARIA AM UFER GERMANY BY DIBA KOPPE

If East Berlin's Maria Am Ufer had windows, it would look out across the River Spree to Neuberg in the west. Approaching it from the deserted Ostbahnhof station, you pass through the kind of scrubland that once characterized East Berlin's abandoned border zones. The city's musical topography has changed considerably since East-Germany's New Wave started drumming tattoos under its raised eyebrows a quarter of a century ago, but its taste for converting concrete bunkers into heaving cathedrals of beats and noise remains undiminished. Celebrating Berlin's thriving culture of independent record labels, the fifth MarkEB festival is a revealing window onto the city's current musical soul. Some 40 impish line the festival's elite gallery with tabletop displays of CDs and vinyl, as—Scape's Stefan Bittke, Staubitz Soundsystem, Morr Music/Lok and others kept browsers' heads spinning with DJ sets. Over two nights in Voss's brood of live rooms, meanwhile, some 30 acts ensured that the music never stopped between sundown and sunrise.

The festival's label orientation is guaranteed a

reluctantly non-partisan programme last, epitomized by a performance by Alessandro Alessandroni, brought in under the auspices of Crippled Dick Hot Wax, a label whose enthusiasm for their unusual archive catalogue is too serious and dignified for them to cheaply market their discoveries as exotic. Alessandroni's name is unfamiliar, his spare, haunting music is instantly recognizable to melomaniacs—he's the man who gutstrummed and whistled the desolate, barbed wire theme of Sergio Leone's *The Good, The Bad And The Ugly*. Armed with a gently amplified guitar and his pursed lips, he performs the theme at least once alongside other movie tunes, during a short set that thoroughly enchants the audience crowded into the smaller of Maria's two rooms.

Earlier, in the main hall, Monika act Barbara Morgenstern & Robert Lippok were no less engaging. Run by Oceanic founder and Monika co-organizer Gudrun Gut, Monika (along with imports like Kitty-Yo and Mori) has helped explode the city's narrow reputation for excessively macho techno or its reverse, introspective electronica, and replace it with more broadly popular but no less imaginative musical front. Live more so than on their beguiling 1994 CD, Morgenstern and Lippok

could be a comic dramatization of this change, with inward-looking sly laptop boy Lippok being drawn out of himself into song by the effervescent keyboards, on-the-fly enthusiasm and wonderfully irresistible vocals of Morgenstern without compromising the music's inventiveness. Their songs crossover digital and analogue means with, at one point, a mechanical guitar-sparking device that makes the music soar with delight.

The contrast between Morgenstern & Lippok and Maria's surprise guest act is instructive. The surprise about this surprise act, who sums up to be 1980s Neue Deutsche Welle mystique-dol Andrea Dorn, is that he still pleads sings to be loved in the same squeaky puppyish voice behind his draft-hd "Fried Vom Jupiter". When he started out back at the dawn of NOW with the help of Düsseldorf cult electro-robot group Der Plan, he was one of the few convincing German alternative popstars. Refreshed as a retro-actio the front by a would-be cabaret turn working the snail but enthusiastic audience for all he was worth, he cuts a more forlorn yet strangely compelling figure.

Transported from Holland to Berlin, Staubitz as a label would bring an oddly dated sense of pre-Wall austerity to the party if their representative on the night, the Chinese based

underground unit FM3 (on this occasion, a solo turn by US-born expat Christian Vinet) weren't so engagingly intimate. Set up offstage in a corner of the room, he pretty much spends the first quarter of his performance sulking the soundbites from the main hall with beer dainties. As he slowly asserts his presence, however, his mixing of the Chinese temple sounds emitted from the range of Buddha machines (limited sample-carrying soundpods) amazed in front of him gradually erects a refuge from invading banging beats.

Berlin's cheap rents and low living costs have lured in other non-German bands, including Jason Forrest's Cock Rock Disco, whose Duran Duran Duran Duran unleashes a punishing yet formidable polyrhythmic drill 'n' bass assault from his laptop, which he all but pelted with as he triggers wave upon wave of beat variations. He is followed by Pövel Records' Rocket Presidential, a German duo consisting of a drummer playing a kit customised from a pair of heavily miked cases and a guitarist, singer, plus a little programmed backup. Ripping maximum post-punk waves out of their minimal resources, Rocket Presidential's defiantly sassy, engaged and enraged set is, after Alessandroni, the weekend's second highlight. □

## Laurie Anderson LONDON BARBICAN THEATRE UK

By ROB YOUNG

Medway through her lunar lops through *The End Of The Moon*, Laurie Anderson tells a ghost story about a proposal she made to Thomas Pynchon to adapt his novel *Groovy Rainbow* into an opera. In her purpose, the romantically reduces author replied by letter, delighted she had asked, and giving his blessing to the project with a single condition: that the entire piece must be scored for one instrument only: The Banjo.

Laurie Anderson is the consummate 21st-century storyteller. In *The End Of The Moon* she's got the pitch spot-on nuggets of passion panned through the sieve of her banjo's blunderbuss. It's a series of riffs loosely based around an invitation from NASA to be their first artist in space. Each tale or tiny accident, its

smallness magnified through her observational imagination, is separated by interludes on her MIDI violin (actually a wala customised by Steinberg), more diaphanous and dark-based than ever before and allowing the whole piece to breathe in what an, admittedly, long, sobering, restrained breath. It's as appropriate because, for all the surface dance of detail and moderated mood, the things she tells of the site have gloomy consequences, and speak of unresolvable quandaries in the gaps between art and science, government and environment.

As the piece opens, the stage floor is constellated with glimmering teatights and she's seated in a red leather armchair that Vincent Price might use to introduce a midnight tale of horror. She locates the work on an Earth whose own narrative has become tangled and unlovable — in life as a sea of randomness whose busy secretaries are undisputed and overlooked. So far, so much familiar Anderson. But when she moves on to recount the first

contact from NASA, whose representative seemed as ignorant as she about the actual role of an artist in residence (Who are those people?" she thinks, exasperated), and her experiences of shadowing various departments and employees, her knave sense of wonder is tempered by an absurdly favoured wit. Melancholy. A new gift for an "intelligent" space suit containing chambers full of drugs, medicines, etc., which can be administered direct to the body, is abandoned to the US military. The people who convert raw data from the Hubble telescope into atmospheric images for public consumption make their own decisions on what colour schemes to use. Anderson preails on them to explain why they choose pink and blue instead of, say, grey and black. "People like these colours", comes the reply. "It looks like heaven." Rock-gathering robots designed for the Martian surface have problems coordinating eyes and hand movements, as though foghazed. Her tone is one of bewilderment and mild

reproach, which is presumably why NASA phoned her up again later, informing her they were bestowing on her the double distinction of being the agency's first artist in residence, and the last.

Anderson has dramatically slowed down her staging, and this beautifully paced show is her best for some time. She aims a small plinth at what she deely controls: the show's cues via a mixer. Rod FX and violin MIDI interludes, plus a period-said DV cam that she attaches to her bow or turns on herself to project her face upside-down. The only odd tale of the evening is something about her dog getting attacked by vultures and his newly awoken upturned gaze resembling the folk of New York after 11 September 2001. But there are moments, like when she's explaining the fallacy of gravity (everything in the universe is travelling along its own line towards its own endpoint), where you think all the seats in the theatre might detach from their moorings and float into space on the insistent lilt of her voice. □

## STEVEN STAPLETON/DIANA ROGERSON/COLIN POTTER/ ANDREW LILES/MATT WALDRON VIENNA DER NARRENTURM AUSTRIA

By PETER REIBERGER

Built in 1784, Der Narrenturm was initially the psychic wing of Vienna's main hospital. It was later turned into a nursing home and finally became the Psychiatrie und Anatomisches Museum in 1978. An imposing round tower with added windows, curved corridors and tiny rooms crisscrossed with startling displays of all manner of deformities of the human condition, all preserved in grey 19th-century authenticity. As the only

building in the old hospital complex not to have been renovated and gentrified, it sticks out like a sore thumb. An ideal location, then, for its uncondemned accident. For reasons unknown, the concert could not be billed as an appearance by Nancy With Wound, despite the presence of the group's entire cast.

On a thankfully grey day, with crowds drying out the building, you would half expect *Fill Marnie's Nostalgia* to go over with shared giggles. Instead, exuberant Walter Rostotski of *Kangaroo* is taking off karmas and handing out free NAW CD-Rs inside the courtyard, the handful of guests (tickets were extremely limited), many of whom had travelled vast distances, wait patiently in the evening drizzle.

In the small room on the third floor, our secret society convenes for two solo sets by Colin Potter and Andrew Liles. For the first, Potter plays devils driven by a large mirror while colourful visuals swirl around on screen. Liles contributes with a carefully set backed with taxonomy films.

After a short break for refreshments, we gather once again. Potter and Liles are now joined by Matt Waldron (aka *Wapp*) on the devices, Diana Rogerson and husband Steve Stapleton, all dressed in white labcoats, setting the controls of a video, the good ship *Liles* and Waldron are seated in the front, with Potter centre stage manning the desk, flanked by Stapleton on devices and Rogerson manhandling between

accordion, vocal and objects. A mysterious looped female voice intones, "Je crois que tu es entrain de le dire sur l'autre enregistrement qu'on a fait" ("I believe that you are saying it on the other recording that was made"), casting the background for the imposed start of the show. Before long our course has shifted, and we have been steered right into a rooming version of *Sancti Maria Colocata*, all five crew members now swathed in stages of ocean waves. However, this is no relaxed trip but a relentless journey with every creek of the vessel sending shivers down the spine, the curved and claustrophobic interior of the Narrenturm adding a disorientating effect. There could not have been a more perfect setting for this disturbing but brilliant music. □

## TONY CONRAD NEW YORK THE KITCHEN USA

By ALAN UICHT & STEVE SMITH

Tony Conrad has long busied himself with an ongoing interrogation of Western musical art, attempting to reinvestigate traditions discarded when interest in timbre and tunings gave way to the formal codification of the tempered scale and the structures of the modern orchestra. According to a programme note he provided for the American premiere of his amplified string trio *Overcharge*, which was recorded last summer in Australia, the piece was a reworking of the *chango*, which he refers to as a "simple harmonic and rhythmic dance scheme" that thrived in Afro-Cuban music of the 60s and 70s. (Alternately many reference sources identify the *chango* not as the form, but rather as the vocals and rhythm-combo groups that played in popular styles such as *dance*, *pachanga* and *cha cha cha*.)

In his note, he suggested that his process bore some relation to the similar derivation of Baroque forms such as the *chacón* and *serenata* from "rowdy Latin American origins". (Ironically, the *chango* was itself originally a Cuban adaptation of a French *ensemble* form.)

Conrad slowed down the form in the extreme, returning it to a 36-note scale system based on the seventh harmonic in the natural overtone series. But all this a rather effectively had to take on life — the results, while sounding like Conrad's characteristic gritty *driftworks*, show no similarity to dance music, Cuban or otherwise. For slightly less than an hour, the composer played alongside New York violinist Karen Watach and Ann Arbor, Michigan bassist Zachary Wallace, filling the performance space with long, loud (though not overbearing), slow lines that moved in under motion, sloping in and out of sync. The concatenation of slowly moving, detuned drones ultimately did achieve a sort of dreamlike density, filled with fluttering, whirling harmonic clusters.

Following the performance, Conrad showed a series of recent short films. These shorts presented another side of Conrad, long recognised as a pioneer of structuralist film making: a quirky auteur of (generally humorous) *klars*. After (2001), which took to its subject male erotic desire as expressed through masturbation, dreamed in a luscious close-up of a hand kneading muscle petals. The uproariously funny *Grading Ties* for *For Teachers* (2003) revisited Professor Conrad's decidedly

Caplari spaces for grading student papers, which indeed included a rubber-band torn on the paper to test the energy contained therein. *Clamming Los Angeles*, one of two shorts announced in the programme, transposed a shortless Conrad into a filmed party of strangers, who turn out to be hardcore SAM types intent on pummeling their genitals by various means. *Reg's Oscillator Pelt* (2003) was a long, tight close-up on Conrad's face as he enticed the convenience of keeping microscope pens in one's mouth. In a final, unannounced film, *Overcharge*, Conrad set himself in a lengthy assembly of profiles with his face in focus and make-up, as he enacted a palindromic exchange of kinetic resignation between a man and woman.

Before the screening, Conrad explained that he had shot the films in Buffalo, where "they like things that are fun", and realised thinking that he'd better not show them in New York City. Repeating, he continued, he added them to this evening's bill — "as dessert" (35).

First performed by Tony Conrad with Rhy Chatham and Laurie Spiegel at The Kitchen in 1972, and rarely since, *Reg's Alive On The Infinite Plane* was cause for excitement among Conrad aficionados. The original configuration

of violin, long string instrument and bass guitar remained (with Jim O'Rourke and Zachary Wallace replacing Chatham and Spiegel) and was augmented by Karen Watach on viola. Lasting two hours, the piece is typical of Conrad's string-dance work, and of the slow-chango music of the 60s and 70s, the tolling one note bass acoustics very gradually over the duration, while the long string lackadronically accentuates different bars and harmonics (or dissonances). Meanwhile, four film projectors beam loops of alternating red and white vertical lines, similar to Conrad's flicker films of the 60s.

It unravels in a splendid illusion of circular motion, like a sideways view of a slide projector spinning endlessly. Given Conrad's note that the piece "seemed to address the need of time for peace" back in 1972 (and again at present), *Reg's Alive* has the feeling of a lament. There's a blue-life quality too; the slow-work on the long string instrument in particular moves some parts sound like an alternative-universe soundtrack to *Paris, Texas* played by a Golem instead of By Dooder. At any rate, this was a highly worthwhile remark, something the Kitchen should keep in mind as it continues to celebrate and reinvestigate its history (AU) □

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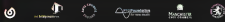
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Sat 16 - Sun 24 July 2005

Musicians of the Nile • Pedro Carneiro  
Chen Zimbalista Percussion Trio • Taiko Meantime  
Master Drummers of Africa • PowerPlant fest. Joby Burgess  
Eric Delaney and the RAF Squadronaires  
Parallax Beat Brothers: Scanner & Pete Lockett  
ensemblebash & Nana Vasconcelos  
A Night in Baghdad: Ahmed Muldhar & Master Arabic Percussionists  
Bikram Ghosh's Rhythmscape with guest Taufiq Qureshi +  
Chakardar Table Ensemble • Oriole • Timeline  
Chant of the Beat: Kurdish Sufi Rhythms  
Geoff Smith and the Cabinet of Dr Caligari  
Roy Haynes' Fountain of Youth • Tania Maria + Lagos Jazz  
Parindt Sharda Sahai & Sanju Sahai

Plus... RHYTHM MAGAZINE (from day workshops and free events)

08703 800 400 [www.rfh.org.uk/rhythmsticks](http://www.rfh.org.uk/rhythmsticks)



# Disinformation

## "the analysis of beauty"\*

\* After the treatise by William Hogarth, published 1753

"The black-ops unit of the avant-garde" Paul Clarke, The Metro  
Live at The Mac, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham B12 9QH  
2 July to 21 August 2005, 0121 440 3838, admission free  
Reception 13 July, 6 to 8pm {Disinformation Vs. USURP, 7pm}

\* Sense Data and Perception" CD out now on Iris Light, "Rorschach Audio 4" out now in Strange Attractor Journal  
Exhibition produced with the generous £ of The Mac and National Touring Programme of The Arts Council England  
Merchandise [www.strangeattractor.co.uk](http://www.strangeattractor.co.uk), [bookartbookshop](http://bookartbookshop) 020 7608 1333, [www.irislight.co.uk](http://www.irislight.co.uk)



# Out There

This month's selected festivals, live events, clubs and broadcasts.

Send info to *The Wire*, 23 Jack's Place, 6 Corbet Place, London E1 6NN, UK  
fax +44 (0)20 7422 5011, [listings@thewire.co.uk](mailto:listings@thewire.co.uk). Compiled by Phil England



Left to right: Stephen O'Malley at Supersonic, Astor Kiro and Fenestor at Version

## UK festivals

### FUTURESONIC MANCHESTER

International festival of electronic music and media arts. To Roscoe Rick's Robert Lippok is the featured artist and plays material from his new album, provides a soundtrack to a video installation and performs a special one-off concert on a giant pipe organ. Other performers include this month's cover star Jamie Uddell, A Guy Called Gerald and Susanne And The Magical Orchestra. Manchester various venues, 22-24 July, various times and prices, 0161 907 9000, [www.futuresonic.com](http://www.futuresonic.com)

### OPTRONICA LONDON

Series of events exploring different combinations of music and the moving image. The line up includes Plant with Bob Jones; premiering their new audiovisual project *Greedy Baby* (20 July at 9.15pm); ex-Kraftwerk member Karl Bartos live (21, 8.30pm); Karl Bartos lecture (22, 8.20pm); audiovisual performances from People Like Us, The Sandoz Plan and Skizitz, Nijigee (22, 8.30pm); DJ Spooky performs a soundtrack to DW Griffith's controversial 1915 silent film *Birth Of A Nation* (22, 8.30pm); Adrenalin TV show

their *The Eye Of The Pilot* outdoors (22, 10.30pm); new work from 30 countries (23, 2pm); Media Remixed screening followed by a panel with DJ Spooky, Heatsink and Eboran (23, 4pm); screening of contemporary work from Japan's VJ culture (23, 6pm); and an audiovisual club night at the Spitz with DJs Legowelt, Jaskin, S. Begg and Vito Enrova, Skatovore and Mason (23, 9pm-3am). London National Film Theatre and other venues, 20-24 July, various times and prices, 020 7392 9032, [www.gotsonics.org](http://www.gotsonics.org)

### RHYTHM STICKS LONDON

Annual series of percussion-based concerts on the South Bank. Concerts include Musicians Of The Nile (16 July), Pedro Carrero plays Jemba Keesek and John Partheas (18), The Congo Kings (17), Lata Moomina (17), Master Drummers Of Africa (18), Jolly Burgess and The Elysian String Quartet perform Kraftwerk, Steve Reich, Tanzy Dennis and Philip Glass (18), Pete Loshell & Scanner (19), Ensemblebank & Nana Vasconcelos (20); Iraqi oud player Ahmed Maltair (20), Bakram Ghani's Rhythmscape (21); Saver India performs *Di Rita* (22); Geoff Smith performs a live soundtrack to *The Cabinet Of Dr Caligari* on hammered dulcimers (22); Roy Haynes Quartet (23) and Shanté Sahai & Sanja Sahai (24). There is also a full programme of

drum clinics, workshops and free events. London South Bank venues, 16-24 July, various times & prices, 08703 800 400, [www.rhythmsticks.com](http://www.rhythmsticks.com)

### SUPERSONIC BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham experimental music festival with a new edge features three stages, installations, films, video bangs, karaoke and cake. Artists include Psychic TV, Merzbow & Stogh on O'Malley, Brian Duffy & Modified Toy Orchestra, Barbara Morgenstern & Robert Lippok, Sargant, Shtrout, Chris Clark, David Cunningham, DJ Trevor Jackson, Outhud, Tearing, Dreams Of Tall Buildings, Dilok, Noagat, Rother & Moebius, Bottles, Paul Damage, DIX, Martin Creed & Band, Jessi, Black Galaxy vs Kreesa, Aerogramme, Esquinox and others. Birmingham Custard Factory, 8-9 July, Friday £7, Saturday £20, both days £25, 0121 604 7777, [www.custardfactory.com](http://www.custardfactory.com)

### VERSION: THE OTHER MUSIC NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE

Excellent line up for these three days of new electronic music, presented on a boat and sponsored by The Wire. The line up features Autechre, Paul Monolake and Cathode (8 July), Fenestor, A Hawk And A Hacksaw, Stars As Eyes and Andrew Hudson (9, daytime) and Soun, Pan Sonic, Chris Clark and Quotient Yellow (9,

evening); Wolf Eyes, Bottles, Khonnor, Tearing and Alisdair Roberts (10). Newcastle-upon-Tyne MS Stubnitz, 8-10 July, 0191 232 1232, [www.version.org.uk](http://www.version.org.uk)

### WOMAD READING

Global sounds annual with Youssou N'dour Et Le Super Étoile De Dakar, Mahmoud Ahmed, Culture, Beto La Momosina Y Sus Bombas, Rovnan Muzozon Gwaili Group, Apache Indian & The Reggae Revolution, Huan-Huan-Te, Kala Chethena Krishakal Theatre Company, Robert Plant & The Strange Sensation, Fotobak Band, Richie Havens, Renegades Steel Orchestra, Jazkily Dabson, Soul Jazz Sound System and others. Reading Riverside, 29-31 July, £30-99-£94.50, 0118 939 0630, [www.womad.org/reading](http://www.womad.org/reading)

## International festivals

### EUROCKEENNES FRANCE

Fringe performs at this large scale rock and pop festival includes Sonic Youth, Kraftwerk, Electrelane, Le Tigre, Kanon No 1, Tom 26, Bonnie 'Prinor' Bly, Amen Teten and Caezobala

PHOTOS: JOHN HUGHES (GALLERY); JANE WATERS (ARTISTWARE); FENESTOR

# FROME FESTIVAL 1-10 JULY 2005

[WWW.FROMEFESTIVAL.CO.UK](http://WWW.FROMEFESTIVAL.CO.UK)

BOX OFFICE 01373 455420 • FESTIVAL OFFICE 01373 453889

Belfort, 1-3 July 00 33 4157 3228,  
www.uscinefilms.fr

**FEED BACK  
FRANCE**

Two-day free festival in a Persian park with the  
The Fall, Wolf Eyes, Lusc, Kins & Why/Roll  
Deep Crawl and more. Paris Parc De La Villette, 9  
& 10-11, 9pm, free, 00 33 1 4003 8666,  
www.c13.fr

**JAZZ A LUZ  
FRANCE**

Long running jazz and new music festival set in  
the heights of the Pyrenees. Fred Frith & Chris  
Cotter, Steve Phillips & Alain Joule, Le Quin Nih  
& Frederic Blouy, Das Weiberten & Edward  
Periaud and more. Luz Saint Sauver Marais  
Pyrenees, 9-12 July 00 33 5 6292 3638,  
www.jazzakuz.com

**LIQUID ARCHITECTURE  
AUSTRALIA**

The sixth incarnation of Australia's annual Liquid  
Architecture music and sound arts festival  
features live performances from Thomas  
Brinkmann, DJ Olive, Eric La Casa & Jean Luc  
Gallone, Philip Samaras, Beta Erko, Severed  
Heads, Wet Gate and others. Melbourne, Sydney,  
Brisbane, Canberra and Cairns various venues,  
1-23 July. www.liquidarchitecture.org.au (NB This  
month of the Wine's subscribers will receive a  
free and exclusive CD of new sound art that has  
been compiled by the Liquid Architecture  
organisers - see page 5 for details.)

**MIMI  
FRANCE**

Henry French experimental music workshop  
festival featuring Meredith Monk & Vocal  
Ensemble, Raphael Imbert/Zim Ngawana/Yann  
Hersant, Soap Killa, Zazouza Lopezova, Beata  
Poljans, Anne Witzack, Vabon, Les Amants De  
Juliette, 433, Daga and Tototoko & Os Cabra,  
Marseille Fiumi Islands, 28-31 July 00 33 4  
9504 9550

**NEW MUSIC INDAABA  
SOUTH AFRICA**

Festival of new composition featuring composers

from across the African continent. The  
composer-in-residence is Ugandan Justinian  
Temausa and the two performing groups in  
residence are Stockholm Saxophone Quartet  
& Saxophone Trio Houbkamp's new computer  
music ensemble POW. There will also be pieces  
by Corbin Nancarrow, Colin McPhee and music  
theatre pieces by Mouno Kagel and Frederic  
Ravello. To celebrate the centenary of composer  
Enoch Sontag's death each of the concerts  
will include a variation or improvisation on the  
South African national anthem. Grahamstown  
National Arts Festival, 1-6 July,  
www.newmusica.org.za

**NORBERGFESTIVAL  
SWEDEN**

Electronic music festival featuring Warp and  
Seed Records acts and others including 812,  
Luz Vibet, Milanesa, Pothuman, Kansas City  
Prophets, Cephalopod Acid, Tim Hecker, Bush  
and the Small Deaths. Norberg various venues,  
26-30 July multimedia festing,  
www.norbergfestival.com

**SAFE AS MILK  
NORWAY**

A mix of local and international acts including  
Supernatural, Coleen, Ken Henthley, Stoffa  
Bush-Jaughans, Serena Manesh, McHa, Dilek,  
Surreal Jackson 5 and others. Haugestrand  
Harvest, 29-30 July, free if travelling from  
outside Norway, www.safes-as-milk.org

**SYNCH  
GREECE**

Electronic music and digital arts weekend with  
Pat Sans, Wolf Eyes, Plast, Mouse On Mars,  
Lusc, Raulo, Hishashi Watanabe, Burnt Friedman  
& Jaki Lubezart, Jamie Lidell, Fennosa and COH.  
Athens Lavrio, 1-3 July 00 www.synch.gr

**TEN DAYS OFF  
BELGIUM**

Dance music event running every night for 11  
days featuring Laga Jaquot, MA, Photek,  
Richie Hawtin, Groove Armada, Hell and Aukin  
among others. Ghent Vourst and ICC, 19-29  
July 00 32 3 226 4963, www.tendaysoff.be

**TONIGHT LET'S ALL MAKE LOVE IN  
BUFFALO  
USA**

Experimental folk festival featuring The MV & EE  
Medicine Show, Tony Conrad & Tim Barnes, Nick  
Cicco, Marissa Nadler, Feather, Pango, Corlie,  
Serena Lubelski, In Gower Ring, Son Of Earth,  
Eyes And Arms Of Smoke, Classic Solution and  
Troy Marlow Buffalo NY Soundarts, 9-10 July,  
529-524, 001 716 883 0330,  
www.adventblues.com, www.bagbirtgalleys.com

**Special events**

**ELECTRONICA LABEL SHOWCASE  
UK**

Promising "mind blowing vocals, summer garden  
funk and sweet neo-dancing", Highpoint  
Lowlife, Adisesh Records and Stuff Records get  
together to showcase artists Morio Blane  
School For Girls, Gemma, Boffice, Tigress and  
Miles. Besides these live acts there are Float  
and Cube Dots and a free barbeque. Bristol Cafe  
Mixology, 2 July, 8pm-late, £5, 0117 907 4190,  
sparanocubedowne.com/andor\_score

**FOLK ARCHIVE  
UK**

Two free afternoon concerts created by The  
Wire's Rob Young as part of the Barbican's  
ongoing exhibition of current folk art. Adam's  
Assembly, A Hawk and A Hacksaw, Larkstar  
John and Di Bob Stanley (10 July) and Robin  
Williamson, Hamilton Yarn and Di Griffin Blyth  
(17), London Barbican Free Stage Level 0, 1-4pm,  
free, 0845 120 7539,  
www.babican.org.uk

**BILL FONTANA'S SOUND LINES  
UK**

American sound artist uses the railway arches of  
Leeds for the latest in his ongoing series of site-  
specific installations. A loudspeaker system will  
emit the live sounds of the River Aire below and  
the Leeds City train station above, turning the  
immense space into a huge brick-built sounding

hall. Leeds Dock Archway, until 20 August,  
www.recordings.org, www.larnen.org

**LUKE FOWLER  
UK**

The video artist's work moves on to Scotland as  
part of the Back's Futures exhibition, includes  
The Way Out - a portrait of the life and work of  
musical artist James Jones aka L Vag, The  
Hermesworld, The Trip, Computer De and Human  
E Phrosyng, Glasgow OCA, until 10 July, 11am-6pm,  
free-Sat, 0141 352 4900,  
www.coa-glasgow.com

**CARL MICHAEL VON HAUSSWOLFF  
UK**

Swedish sound, light, film and installation artist  
in his first solo UK show which includes a newly  
commissioned work inspired by the fabled  
Almest mountain fortress which served as the  
training ground for assassins under Islamic  
leader Hassan I Sakhel. London Becontreefield,  
until 31 July, Thurs Sun, noon-6pm, 020 7382  
5445, info@carlmichael.co.uk

**IMPROLISONS  
SWEDEN**

Exhibition by Swedish artists Henrik Rylander and  
Per Svensson of their sound machines, sound  
sculptures and invented instruments. Göteborg  
Neon, until 7 August, 00 46 414 73100,  
www.rengallery.se

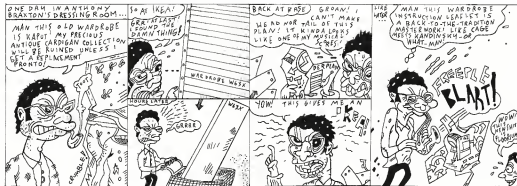
**MAKE MUSIC NOW  
USA**

Two concerts as part of the Sculpture Center's  
Make It Now: New Sculpture in New York  
exhibition. Award-folk from Garrison Cole and  
Buffy Santos (15 July) and new electronic  
music by Mountaintops aka Kean Mollins and  
Brandon Anderson, and An Onix & Alan Licht  
(22), New York Brooklyn Galleries Art Space,  
8pm, \$5/concert, 001 718 361 1750 (ext  
115), www.sculpture-center.org

**THE OWL PROJECT  
UK**

Sound arts duo perform on their Sound Lathes,  
which uses sensors and switches to generate  
soundscapes and sound while whittling a sculpture

# Trip Or Squeek



august 18-21  
2005

6th annual  
san francisco  
electronic  
music  
festival

www.sfemf.org

victoria jordanova  
morton subotnick  
eric glick risman  
patrice scanlon  
chase butterfly  
butch morris  
george lewis  
matt heckert  
bevin kelley  
gal\*in\_dog  
the hub  
suteikh

BornArts Cultural Center  
534 Brannan St.  
San Francisco, CA  
USA

british composer awards



The British Academy of Composers & Songwriters invites nominations for the third annual British Composer Awards 2005.

All UK composers are eligible to be awarded in 12 categories which encompass the wide range of contemporary composition as the heart of British classical music. The Awards seek not only to give recognition for achievement but also to encourage the development of repertoire.

This year the New Media category has been created to award a composer who has developed outstanding original works in the electronic, electro-acoustic, multi-media, or interactive disciplines.

if you would like to nominate a composer for these Awards, contact the Academy on 020 7636 2929 or for more information visit [www.britishacademy.com](http://www.britishacademy.com)

BRITISH ACADEMY OF COMPOSERS & SONGWRITERS

The Awards are presented in conjunction with BBC Proms 3 and 4 and sponsored by the Performing Arts Society.

out of wood, Derby Q Arts, 18 July, 10am-4pm, 01332 286 858, [www.sqa.co.uk](http://www.sqa.co.uk)

**PUBLIC ACCESS WEEK**  
UK  
International exhibition of visual art where many of the artists are also involved in music including Albert Oehar (Red Kmyel), Andy Bous (Lil Mousture) and Alasdair Willis (Vormen)

There are also a number of performance art nights throughout the exhibition including Hypnotique and Sector 13 (8 July) and Tony Wakeford's Noir Duo with Andrew Miles and Walker (30). Eastbourne Nemeskar, 8, 3 July-29 August, 11am-11pm daily except Mondays, 01323 730152

**SIX SITES FOR SOUND**  
LONDON  
Three site-specific sound installations, one evening of performances, a series of radio broadcasts and a magazine with a free CD. The three installations running throughout July are: Jon Faine's *Shovelplay* (Mina Enterprises, Friday-Sunday, noon-6pm), Michael J Schumacher's *Room Piece* (For London 2005 [MOT], Friday-Sunday, noon-6pm) and a blank's *Abolition* (Pentecost Avenue, Friday-Sunday, noon-6pm). An evening of two performances features the installation artists as well as Dawn Seale, Rebecca Labele and Nathan Gmecht (Gate Britain, 1 July 6-9.30pm, free). A sound art themed issue of *Resonance* magazine + CD will be published to coincide with the occasion and there will be a number of broadcasts on Resonance 104.4 FM which also be in [www.sixsitesounds.net](http://www.sixsitesounds.net)

**THE SOUND OF OERBY ARBORETUM**  
UK  
Site-specific installation by Weather and Jan Morton based on a recording of the sound of sap rising and trees growing. Oerby Arboretum Lodge, 2 July 8-August, 10am-6pm, 01332 295 858, [www.oerby.co.uk](http://www.oerby.co.uk)

**TWO ENTANGLED EVENTS**  
UK  
Two events on 10 July in celebration of three decades of Alice Fisher's poetry. The daytime event features six hours of readings both off and on a Rotunda stage by Fisher and friends including Lawrence Upton, Gus Cheek and others (depart outside London Temple tube, 11am). This is followed by an evening of readings, improvised music, electroacoustics and other artistic manifestations by Fisher, Eddie Privost, John Edwards, John Wall, Mark Sanders, Rob Holway and Uli Friess (London The Museum of Gowland House, 23 July, 6.30pm, [www.alicefisher.co.uk/whatsongedevents.html](http://www.alicefisher.co.uk/whatsongedevents.html))

**WIRDED WOMEN FESTIVAL**  
All-day event taking place in and around London's Spitz and Old Spitalfields Markets. Events include art installations, workshops, talks, DJs, parades, film screenings and puppet shows. Acts confirmed for the evening concert include Cobra Lil, Pissy Gl and Chicks On Speed's Anst Ben-Devid, with more to be confirmed. London The Spitz and Old Spitalfields Market, 16 July, 020 7392 9032, [www.spitz.co.uk](http://www.spitz.co.uk)

## On stage

**A HAWK & A HAWKAW**  
Audience continue to rejoice in Jeremy Baines's one man band. Aberdeen Peacock Visual Arts (1

July), Glasgow The 13th Note (2), Hull The Adelphi (3), Leeds The Fenton (4), Manchester The Bowling Green (5), Leicester Bar Nova (6), Colchester Arts Centre (7), Newcastle Version Festival (8) and London Barbican (10, 1-4pm, free) [www.brokenwavefoundation.org.uk/haik](http://www.brokenwavefoundation.org.uk/haik)

**GEORGE CLINTON & PARLIAMENT/FUNKADELIC**  
The greatest funk band returns. London Forum, 23 July, £18.50, 0870 534 4444, [www.meridianfm.com](http://www.meridianfm.com)

**COCOROSE**  
The loopy Cassidy sisters preview their anticipated second album, *Noah's Ark* (Touch & Go). London Bush Hall, 16 July, £10, 020 8222 6855, [www.cocorose.co.uk](http://www.cocorose.co.uk)

**COLLEEN & CHARLES HAYWARD**  
Name melodic instrumentals from French composer Cecile Colleen. Schott supported by a solo set from the drummer, songwriter and The Host founding member London ICA, 28 July, 7.30pm, £10, 020 7530 3647, [www.ica.org.uk](http://www.ica.org.uk)

**SAG FRANCIS & GRANO BUFFET**  
Socially aware artists report on post-Metropolitan Rescue Rooms (26 June), Glasgow Oremor (27), Manchester Roadhouse (28), London Cargo (29) and Bristol Vinty Centre (1 July). [www.sagfrancis.net](http://www.sagfrancis.net)

**THE ICP ORCHESTRA**  
The legendary Dutch Instant Composers Pool led by pianist Misha Mengelberg plays an extremely rare London date as part of the City of London Festival. London Spitz, 1 July 7pm, £15-£12.50, 020 7392 9032, [www.icp.org](http://www.icp.org)

**LOVE WITH ARTHUR**  
West Coast rock blues acts with the 1960s legends now associated with original guitarist Johnny Echols. Stourbridge Rock City (1 July), Shrewsbury Music Hall (2), Liverpool Cuffing Academy (3), Cambridge The Junction (5), Oxford The Zodiac (6), London London Academy (7), Milton Keynes Stables Theatre (8), Frome Cheese & Grain (10), Falmouth Princess Theatre (11), Exeter Phoenix Arts Centre (12) and Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms (13). [www.lovewitharthur.co.uk](http://www.lovewitharthur.co.uk)

**MUSIC FOR A 21ST CENTURY**  
**SUNDAY EVENING**  
The debut performance of Langham Research Centre - a mix of BBC Radio 3 producers creating live musical concrete - with Italian violin and bass duo Pilobas and an extended work from the Playpiano Ensemble, pitching 12 instrumentalists against quadrophonic electronics. Hungerford St Lawrence's Church, 15 July, 8pm, free, 07939 623449

**NOUVELLE VAGUE & KANNE HUKKELBERG**  
Brazilian multi-instrumental duo plus eight female vocalists who play music by the Clash, Jay Division and The Cure without having heard the originals (apparently it's the singers that haven't heard the originals). Support comes from the Norwegian singer-songwriter featured on *The Wire* 3.13 plus her six-piece group. London Queen Elizabeth Hall, 11 July, 7.45pm, £18.50, 0870 401 8181, [www.rh.org.uk](http://www.rh.org.uk)

**PORTABLE**  
South African minimalist techno artist Xenia Abrasimovic promoting 15th new album *Menap* plus Bristol techno DJ Ian Peterbreck, Tim The Rize, Luke Malcher and Miro Mani. Bristol Corsies, 22 July 8pm-late, £2, 0117 9424110, [www.susalelectronic.com](http://www.susalelectronic.com)

[www.susalelectronic.com/under\\_scare](http://www.susalelectronic.com/under_scare)

**SIGUR RÖS**  
Sweeping and global Icelandic post-rock. London Somerset House, 10 July, £22.50, 020 7845 4870, [www.somerset-house.org.uk](http://www.somerset-house.org.uk)

**SYSTEMS IN TIME-STEVE REICH & PHILIP GLASS**  
Two concerts of the more experimental works of New York's most famous minimalist composers. The first features some of Steve Reich's 1966 tape-phase piece *Delta* Oct. 1962's Vermont *Contourpoint* which features ten layers of pre-recorded material and an eleven-hour performance live by flautist Nancy Ruller, the single-chord *Four Organs* for electronic organ and maracas, and *Pendulum*, which uses microphones swung in front of speakers (8 July). The second concert features the amplified 13 piece new music ensemble *lockmaster* performing Glass's rarely played 80 minute *Alma* with Changing Parts from 1973. London Almeida Theatre, 8 & 9 July 7.30pm, £13-£5, 020 7359 4404, [www.almeida.co.uk](http://www.almeida.co.uk)

**THIRD ANNUAL CAMBRIDGE FESTIVAL OF LOOPING**  
Looping mania from The Fuzzy Logics, Nick Robertson and Ben Wapfield. Cambridge Michaelhouse Cafe, 2 July, 8-11pm, £6-£5, [www.cambridge-loopfest.org](http://www.cambridge-loopfest.org)

**VAN DER GRAAF GENERATOR**  
The UK Prog outfits continue their comeback. London Shepherd's Bush Empire, 8 July, 0870 771 2000

**WEIRK RECORDS/GRIM DUBS**  
The artists behind Mark Ruffalo's anonymous Grim Dub plates have put together a showcase featuring label artists Actress, Benny Monyelle, Stak, Uberdog and P-S-94. Expect "a blend of genre riddms, althoush bass movements and visceral buzzing saw-waves" Sheffield undisclosed underground bunker, 9 July [www.cdo.org.uk](http://www.cdo.org.uk), [www.weirk-t.com](http://www.weirk-t.com)

**BRIAN WILSON**  
More UK dates for the rejuvenated former Beach Boy. Eastbourne Congress Theatre (12 July), Brighton The 14, Brighton The New Academy (15) and Glasgow City Hall Auditorium (16). [www.brianwilson.com](http://www.brianwilson.com)

## Club spaces

**BACK IN YOUR TOWN**  
The forward-looking improvisation monthly this month presents Flood Warning, three free and a superb featuring drummer Pete Martin, acoustic Steve Benford, Clive Bell, Moris Spaine, Simon King, Andrew Judes and Ian R. Walker. London Red Rose Club, 21 July 8.30-11pm, £5/£3, 020 7263 7265

**KLINKER GALTSON**  
Experimental music and performance club featuring The Occasional Singing Band (1 July), Bob Smith, Ransom, Adam Coney & David Coulter, Cox Out Barry Field (5), Sami Ransom, Men From Uranus, Or Maries Belia (8), Two Old Joesons featuring Verman Weston and Darren Monnes, Zoe The Children, Zoe Dallas, Lucy Weston, Stewart Keith, Anna Thompson & Kera Kugel (15), Hiss and Apparitions (19), Gabriel Keen & Bob Peckey (24), Minimal Fruit Case (26) and a special last act before the club's summer break with gigs to be announced (29). London The Senses, Tuesdays and Fridays, 8pm.



£5/£2.50, 020 8806 8218,  
www.kilidercup.info

#### MULTI VITAMINS

Weekly electronic, minimal electronics and UK Bass night featuring live acts, DJs and visuals hosted by David Malicious. London The Pool, Thursdays, 7pm-1am, free, 07957 492 265, www.multipitamins-records.com

#### MULTI VITAMINS

Monthly electronic night on two floors featuring live acts, DJs and visuals hosted by David Malicious. London Costa Studios, 26 July and last Thursday of every month, 7pm-1am, free/£2 after 10pm, 07957 492 265, www.multipitamins-records.com

#### THE QUARTER

South Wales night dedicated to emerging forms of music and multi-disciplinary performance. This month, impressing harpist Rhedri Davies, German electronics and live video group Inctra and Cardiff based indie The Sound Engineer. Cardiff Dismanters, 12 July, 8pm, £6/£5, 02920 252024, www.thecapitalonline.co.uk

#### RAY'S JAZZ AT FOYLES

Free monthly performances of improvised music in the record shop cum café continue with pedal steel guitarist BJ Cole. London Ray's Jazz at Foyles, 28 July, 6pm, free, 020 7440 3205, www.foyles.co.uk

#### SPIRIT OF GRAVITY

South coast experimental and electronic music night featuring Hamburg based duo Inctra, ex-SPK member Derek Thompson aka Kormaz performing with drum loops, drum triggered sounds and samples; and electronics from Dan Powell's Gunet Project. Brighton The Prince Albert, 20 July, 8.30-11pm, £3, www.spiritofgravity.com

#### WIRED WOMEN

Electronic women in electronic music monthly with live performances from Arent, Miranda La Mataria, Terry Ben for Clint, Miranda La Mataria, Terry Ben for Clint, Ben David, Military Sweethearts and others. London The Split, 30 June, 7pm, £6, 020 7392 9032, www.wfpc.co.uk

## Incoming

### FESTIVAL INTERNACIONAL DE BENICASSIM

#### SPAIN

Fringe plays at this Spanish rock fest include Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds, LCD Soundsystem, La Renga, Massive Hermet, Daniel Johnston, Massive on Mars, Pan Sonic, Four Tet, Devendra Banhart and 'H. Modest, 4-7 August, www.welbert.com

### THE GREEN MAN FESTIVAL

#### UK

The thriving poster's Glastonbury this year features a strong alt folk programme including The Incredible String Band, Bonnie 'Prince' Billy & Matt Sweeney, Joana Newsom, Josephine Foster, Alasdair Roberts and many more. Hay De Wyre Baskerville Hill, 19-21 August, 01874 611129, www.thegreenmanfestival.co.uk

### HAPPY NEW EARS

#### BERLIN

Tenth anniversary of this series of concerts, post-modern open and site-specific installations. As well as a performance of Perfect Partner, a new music/film project featuring Kim Gordon, Tins Barnes, DJ Olive and Ike Mori, performers include Thomas Kider, Stadelplatz & Enrie Stocks, Peter Vermeersch's Flat Earth Society, Paul Desay/DJ Olive and Trevor Wallart. Karoly Factory H Hart and other locations, 24 September-9 October, 0032 56 221001, www.happynewears.be

### JAZZ EM AGOSTO

#### PORTUGAL

International jazz and improvisation annual with Globe Unity Orchestra, Alexander von Schlippenbach/Evan Parker/Paul Lovens, Irene Schweizer & Pierre Feno, Mark Dresser/Dennis Maroney/Michael Sarin, Hans Koch/Martin Schütz/Fredy Stader, Jaga Jaka, Erik Friedlander, Synce Cosmoverse/Wus Men/Susie Ibaña, Philip Johnstone & Gary

Lucas in Fast 'N' Furious and many more. Lisbon Centro De Arte Moderna, 9-13 August, 00 35 1 217 823 465

### NUMUSIC

#### NORWAY

Styling itself Scandinavia's largest electronic music event, this festival, which this year is sponsored by The Wire, has pulled off something of a coup by hosting three days of music by Karlensæ Skolsholmen, during which the masters himself will direct performances of some of his most epochal works, including Gesang Der Jünglinge, Zeinmusik, Krontale and Mythen. The event also hosts appearances by The Göttinger Ensemble, Michael Röther & Dieter Möbus, Jamie Lidell, Carl Craig, Luke Wert, Biosphere performing an audio-visual work in the local cathedral and more. Stavanger venues, 24-28 August, www.umusic.no

### SAN FRANCISCO ELECTRONIC MUSIC FESTIVAL

Electronic music from composers George Lewis, Lawrence D'Burke Morris and Martin Substrak plus local artists The Hula, Sutekh and others. San Francisco Somers Cultural Center, 20-21 August, 8pm, www.sfemf.org

### SCHIPHOL EQUINOX FESTIVAL

#### GERMANY

Joan Heave Peron hosts his annual shindig. As well as films, installations, martial arts, horses, jugglers and preachers there will be live performances from Rast featuring Peron and Zappi Denimier, Chris Carter, Charles Hayward, The Stille Mares Drone Orchestra, Oliver Mondshine and Andy Carlsbur from Urban States, Tim Barnes, Numb, Ecogang, Gunstar Aychesoon, Chris Kerner from Arman Düll, Ili Treppe from Guru Guru plus Kosmosch club DJs Schiphol, 16-18 September, www.fest-fest-fest.com

### THE SHOOGIES

Three shoogies for the reformed 'greatest group of all time' including a London concert, which sees Iggy and co performing the whole of their world-debating 1970 album Fun House. Leeds Festival (26 August), Reading Festival (28) and London Apollo (30) □

Out There issues for the August issue should reach us by Friday 1 July

GLAZING PRESENTS

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# UK Radio

### RESONANCE 104.4 FM

Broadcasts across Central London from 1am, seven days a week with reports broadcast outside these times. QD quality Web streaming and full listings at www.resonancefm.com

### ADVENTURES IN MODERN MUSIC

Thursdays 9.30pm. Presented by The Wire staff

### BANALITY

Alternate Saturdays 8pm With Richard Thomas

### BERMUQA TRIANGLE

Thursdays midnight. Presented by These Records

### CLEAR SPOT

Weekdays 7pm. Open access slot

### NOSTALGIE YA MBOKA

Saturdays 130pm

### CROSS RADIO

Sundays 11.30pm. John Doncker's radio art show

### OGGERS

Thursdays 5pm With Savage Penell and Sharon Gal

### FIFTY-FIFTY SOUND SYSTEM

Thursdays 11.30pm. Old School dub & reggae

### KOSMISCHE

Thursdays 10pm. Cosmic music

### MINING FOR GOLD

Fridays 1pm With Johnny Brown

### ONKYO

Alternate Wednesdays 8.30pm. Japanese music with The Wire's Siba Kaye, Alan Cummings and Cive Bell

### OST

Thursdays 4.30pm. Soundtracks with Johnny Trunk

### OUT TO LUNCH

Wednesdays 2pm. With Ben Wilson

### OVER THE EDGE

Saturdays 8pm. With Negativland

### ROUGH TRACE SHOP

Thursdays noon. With Simon Russell

### SCRATCHING THE SURFACE

Alternate Tuesdays 8.30pm. With Marc Burton

### SOUL STEEL

Wednesdays 1am. With Cokstad

### SOUND POETS EXPOSED

Sundays 6.15pm. With Clive Graham

### SOUND PROJECTING

Fridays 9.30pm. With Ed Present

### THE TRADITIONAL MUSIC HOUR

Thursdays 2pm. With Rag Rag

### VERMILLION SOUNDS

Alternate Fridays 8.30pm. Environmental recordings

### YOU ARE HEAR

Monday 8.30pm. Live sessions

### SUNDAY RADIO 1 97-99 FM

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Sunday 11pm-1am

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Late Junction

Monday Thursday 10.15-midnight New Music

### JAZZ ON 3

Fridays 11.30pm-1am

Modern jazz in session and concert

### HEAR AND NOW

Sunday 11pm-1am New Music magazine

### MIXING IT

Fridays 10.15-11.30pm

Hyper-edited mix of world sounds

### BBC LANCASHIRE

95.5/103.9/104.6 FM, 855 MW

### ON THE WIRE

Saturday 10pm-midnight. The Wire's dub columnists Steve Barker mixes it up worldwide

### BBC MERSEYSIDE

95.8 FM, 1485 MW

### PMS

Sunday midnight-2am. Avant sounds mixed

### CABLE RADIO 89.8 FM

(MILTON KEYNES)

### GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS

Fridays 10am-midnight. Eclectic avant mix

### XFM 104.9 FM (LONDON)

### FLO-MOTION

Sunday 10pm-midnight. Leftfield electronica

Links to UK radio broadcasts can be found on The Wire Website: www.thewire.co.uk

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issue is filled with in-depth coverage of the most radical and innovative musicians (past and present) in the arenas of electronic music, avant rock, HipHop, new jazz, noise, modern composition, traditional music and beyond. You won't find this kind of informed mix anywhere else. Don't be without it.

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With last month's issue, *The Wire's* cover price went up to £3.80, our first price increase in almost two years. However, our subscription rates are unchanged, which means subscribing to the magazine is now better value than it has ever been. You can subscribe to *The Wire* online at [www.thewire.co.uk](http://www.thewire.co.uk) or use the form on page 101

## *The Wire Tapper* series

The Wire Tapper is a unique and ongoing series of CDs that are compiled by The Wire staff and given away to all our subscribers worldwide with selected issues of the magazine.

Each CD is designed to function as an accompaniment to the kind of wide-ranging mix of new underground music that gets featured in the pages of *The Wire* each month. Vols. 1-5 and Vols. 7, 8, 11, and 13 are single CDs; Vols. 6, 9, 10 and 12 are double CD.

When you order a subscription to *The Wire* you can opt to receive one of five free introductory packages, four of which include previous volumes in *The Wire Tapper* series – see opposite for details.

Subscribers can also get copies of previous volumes in *The Wire Tapper* series with back issue orders – see page 101. The next volume in the series will be given away to all subscribers later this year.



**More free music...**

In addition to *The Wine Tipper* series we regularly collaborate with a variety of labels and organisations to produce special CDs that are given away exclusively to all subscribers worldwide with selected issues (so they are not available with copies of the magazine sold in shops). The latest CD in this series is a new compilation from Australia's Liquid Architecture organisation that is given away to all subscribers with this month's July issue - see page 5 for details. Many of the CDs in this series are still available to subscribers with back issue orders - see page 101.



**THE WIRE TAPPER** 1 ALICE, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001

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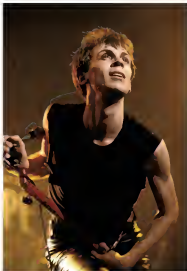






# Epiphanies

Nick Southgate reaches the rock outsider equivalent of Nirvana through the teachings of Saint Julian



Greatness and perfection: Julian Cope, 1987

It started on the BBC chat show *Wogan*. It was a Wednesday night in September 1986. Julian Cope, famously plugged into the public eye by Island Records, popped up performing his comeback single "World Shut Your Mouth". Head to foot in leathers, he preened and railed from his monkey mic stand. The king of early evening chat didn't know what to make of it. That was not my epiphany. It is, however, the moment I can finger as the beginning of a musical epiphany and a journey I'm still following. In many ways it was the moment I started writing the words you are reading here.

"World Shut Your Mouth" was (and is) the standout track from Cope's Saint Julian album. Island's supreme confidence that his latent star quality would convert from cult status to massive earnings pumped the bellows of a promotional furnace that spewed forth multi-format singles and endless promo items. Among these was a bonus interview disc packaged up with the album.

I'm nostalgic about Saint Julian and I still love the "Louise Louie" rail of "World Shut Your Mouth" or the space-op of "Trampoline" and "Spacehopper" — all still live staples for Cope. The rest of the album is so-so. Swatches of Yamaha DX7 synth trap it in a world of radio-friendly 80s production. Saint Julian didn't change my life, but the interview did.

It's a conversation between Cope and radio presenter Trevor Dann. It's designed to be filler puff 'n' fluff. It's PR fodder to fill college airwaves in farflung states before the tour bus rolls through. Discs like this should be mere historical curios. The questions were probably prearranged, the answers rehearsed. Yet despite this it became a document to return to, an instruction template and the first article of my musical faith.

Cope, it should be said, has a fine speaking voice. Poised, measured, slightly snotty. Possibly forced or mannered, it's still great to listen to. His tone and approach are aloof and sure in a manner most teenagers would die for. Dann first asks if Cope is looking forward to being a pop star again. A pause.

Consideration. Prolongation. "No," he utters in a way so knowingly and confidently dismissive, so vividly and violently self-aware, I was hooked. Cope was as cool as I hoped he was. He was certainly as cool as I'd ever need to be.

Halfway through, he set off the bouncing bomb that caromed through my musical life for the next few years. He's asked about his burgeoning tastes and influences in his home town of Tamworth. He lists a series of acts. I'd never heard of them: Neul, Can, Faust, The Stooges, Nick Drake. Each is measured in his mouth the way an evangelist preacher would name the books of the Old Testament; mystical, esoteric words of power and knowledge. I knew I had to have this stuff. Almost 20 years on, it seems preposterous how much I struggled and laboured to hear those recordings. Now one swoop online would get the lot. In the 1980s it took hard work. Time had to be invested. Flimsy funds had to be asked. This is what made Cope so valuable. He underwrote the risks. He never let me down.

First I turned up a Nick Drake track on an Island double sampler *Bumpers*. It was knickered, but "Hazy Jane II" felt like music from another place. I saved hard for the *Fruit Tree* box. It became a pillar and foundation. I scumbled on a copy of the Can compilation *Openers* a few months later. It was mind expanding. "Vitamin C" lolloped and grooved permanently into my sense of musical right and wrong. This, I shouted in my own head, is what I meant! More like that! Where! How! What else could Cope offer?

There were two covers on the "World Shut Your Mouth" single: Pere Ubu's "Non-Alignment Pact" and The 13th Floor Elevators' "I've Got Levitation". All I could find was a live Elevators album. It's a rope beyond belief. Yet in those dusty howls and jugband bit-pouts I knew I'd found something to cherish. Fortune decreed that Fontana made a limited reissue of Ubu's *The Modern Dance*. I could only get a cassette copy. I wore it thin. It sounded more perfect. If I'd never get the modern dance it didn't matter

because Cope did. All I had to do was keep listening in his footsteps.

He mentioned The Seeds. They were on the cover of the late lamented magazine *Strange Things Are Happening*. I devoured it. The Bam Caruso label issued a *Best Of...* on the ugliest swirling chocolate vinyl. Driving 80s pop genius. Another blueprint, another path to follow. And then to discover Cope had a secret single on the label. I bought everything on Bam Caruso that I could find: *Rubble* compilations, The Monks, *The Prisoner* soundtrack, The Left Banke, The Pretty Things, The Eyes. It was a freikbeat Nirvana, and Cope had taken me there.

In the meantime Neul amassed a level of mystique and wonder in my imagination that no act before or after has matched. I couldn't find it anywhere. Almost no one seemed to have heard of them. Those that knew smiled knowingly at my vain quest. Yet my asking after these hallowed treasures brought friendships and fruits. Now defunct Wimbledon record shop Big Star became used to my persistent enquiries. Instead Paul behind the counter dispensed related treasures: Wire, Television, Richard Hell, Pat Smith, The Stooges (finally!), all in short, sharp succession. I learnt the canon avidly hour after hour.

It took almost eight years to hear any Neul. Finally a vinyl promo of an *MMF* tape with an edit of "Heliogabius" surfaced. Dropping the needle was exultant after such a wait. Neul delivered immaculately. It was like the mothership hanging in the air, massive as a city, blowing our human planet-bound consciousness and dragging us kicking and screaming into the cosmic wonder. It was also Cope that took me to The Wire, with his 1995 articles on Can that subsequently formed part of *Krautrock* sampler. Cope's writings were the first lesson of my epiphany. As one critic put it, when Cope wrote about Tangerine Dream he made you believe they were once the most dangerous four men in the world. You felt you had to listen. It's what I try to achieve when I write about music. And it all started with Terry Wogan. □

# The Wire T-shirts 2005



**Roberto Opallo**

**allen\_vinyl\_astrai\_interconnection**

A new piece of artwork by one half of the Italian space rock duo My Cat Is An Alien. According to the artist: "The image represents the psychic and physical connection between the alienation and the vinyl's musical flow, conceived as source of cosmic enlightenment!" The design is printed in pale blue and white on a dark blue T-shirt, with *The Wire* url printed in white on the right sleeve. Limited edition of 100 shirts



**The standard T-shirt**

A black T-shirt with *The Wire* logo printed in blue across the front. Unlimited edition

*The Wire* T-shirt comes in two styles: a standard black shirt printed with *The Wire* logo; plus a series of limited edition shirts featuring specially commissioned designs by a variety of underground artists, musicians and organisations.

These special edition T-shirts are printed in limited runs of 100 shirts each. Once these have been sold, that's it, they won't be reprinted. For details of prices, sizes and how to order, turn to page 101

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REKID CORKER/CONBOY  
SMYGLYSSNA

33

SOUL JAZZ RECORDS

## MICROSOLUTIONS #1 SJR LP/CD 115

Soul Jazz Records subsidiary electronic label, Microsolutions to Megaproblems celebrates two years of releases with this new album. Microsolutions to Megaproblems brings together many of the finest experimental electronic artists working in their respective fields today – whether it be electronica, avant hip-hop, twisted disco, deep jazz and more. This album features tracks from all the earlier 12" releases plus unique exclusives for this album. Release Date: June 2005

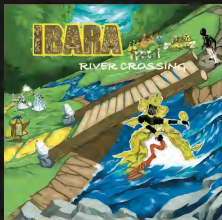


## MARK STEWART KISS THE FUTURE SJR LP/CD 113

Curated by Mark Stewart, "Kiss the Future" is a mixture of new material (with collaborators such as The Bug, Sanjay T), classic material from the legendary Pop Group as well as Stewart's groundbreaking solo-work from the 1980s to the present day with the legendary Sugarhill Records/Tommy Boy rhythm section (The Maffia) along with producer Adrian Sherwood (On-U Sound). With unlimited access to the vaults, "Kiss The Future" also includes rare and unreleased material. Release Date: Out Now

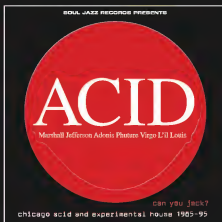
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## IBARA: RIVER CROSSING YOR LP/CD 111

After two years of Osunlade's Yoruba Records and Soul Jazz Records working together this new compilation features all new material from a host of like minded artists from around the globe that Osunlade has put together. Djimi Brown, Nadirah Shakoor, KB, Siji, P Nice, Robert Strauss and loads more. The music is an essential mixture of Deep House, Latin, African and Jazz. Release Date: June 2005



## ACID SJR LP/CD 111

Acid: Chicago Acid and Experimental House. The story of the birth and rise of Chicago's a music scene. Featuring all the major artists: Marshall Jefferson, Lil Louis, Adonis, DJ Pierre, Cajmere, Tyrone, Larry Heard as well as many others. Includes text by Tim Lawrence (author of Love Saves The Day), exclusive photos and interviews with many of the artists. Double CD/Double LP vol2/Doubles LP vol2 Release Date: Out Now